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Contents.

	Page.
Sketch of the Life of William Cowper, Esq.	1
Table Talk,	3
Progress of Error,	10
Truth,	15
Expostulation,	21
Hope,	27
Charity,	34
Conversation,	40
Retirement,	48
The Task, Book I. The Sofa,	55
II. The Time-Piece,	62
III. The Garden,	70
IV. The Winter Evening,	78
V. The Winter Morning Walk,	85
VI. The Winter Walk at Noon,	93
Epistle to Joseph Hill, Esq.	102
Tirocinium; or, a Review of Schools,	103

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

The Yearly Distress, or Tithing Time at Stock, in Essex,	112
Sonnet to Henry Cowper, Esq.	ib.
Lines addressed to Dr. Darwin,	113
On Mrs. Montagu's Feather Hangings,	ib
Verses supposed to be written by Alexander Selkirk,	ib.
On the Promotion of Edward Thurlow, Esq.	114
Ode to Peace,	ib.
Human Frailty,	ib.
The Modern Patriot,	115
On observing some names of little note recorded in the Biographia Britannica,	ib.
Report of an adjudged case, not to be found in any of the books,	ib.
On the burning of Lord Mansfield's library,	116
On the same,	ib.
The love of the world reproved.	ib.
On the death of Lady Throckmorton's Bulfinch,	ib.
The Rose,	117
The Doves,	ib.
A Fable,	118
A Comparison,	ib.
Another, addressed to a young lady,	ib.
The Poet's New-Year's Gift,	ib.
Ode to Apollo,	119
Pairing Time anticipated. A fable,	ib.
The Dog and the Water Lily,	120
The Poet, the Oyster, and the Sensitive Plant,	ib.
The Shrubbery,	121
The Winter Nosegay,	ib.
Mutual forbearance necessary to the happiness of the married state,	ib.
The Negro's complaint,	122
Pity for poor Africans,	ib.
The Morning Dream,	123
The Nightingale and Glow Worm,	ib.
On a Goldfinch starved to death in his cage,	124
The Pine-apple and the Bee,	ib.
Horace, Book II. Ode X,	ib.
A reflection on the foregoing ode,	125
The Lily and the Rose,	ib.
Idem Latine Redditum,	ib.
The Poplar field,	ib.
Idem Latine Redditum,	126
Votum,	ib.

Translation of Prior's Chloe and Euphelia,	126
The history of John Gilpin,	ib.
Epistle to an afflicted Protestant lady in France,	129
To the Rev. W. C. Unwin,	ib.
To the Rev. Mr. Newton,	130
Catharina,	ib.
The Moralizer corrected,	ib.
The Faithful Bird,	131
The Needless Alarm,	ib.
Boadicea,	133
Heroism,	ib.
On the receipt of my mother's picture out of Norfolk,	134
Friendship,	135
On a mischievous Bull,	137
Annus Memorabilis, 1789,	ib.
Hymn for the use of the Sunday School at Olney,	138
Stanzas subjoined to a bill of mortality for the year 1787,	ib.
The same for 1788,	139
The same for 1789,	ib.
The same for 1790,	140
The same for 1792,	ib.
The same for 1793,	ib.
Epitaph on Mr. Hamilton,	141
Epitaph on a Hare,	ib.
Epitaphium Alterum,	ib.
Stanzas on the first publication of Sir Charles Grandison,	142
Address to Miss ——, on reading the Prayer for Indifference,	ib.
A Tale founded on a fact,	143
To the Rev. Mr. Newton, on his return from Ramsgate,	ib.
Poetical epistle to Lady Austen,	144
Song, written at the request of Lady Austen,	145
Verses from a poem entitled Valediction,	ib.
Epitaph on Johnson,	ib.
To Miss C——, on her birth-day,	ib.
Gratitude,	146
The Flatting Mill,	ib.
To Mrs. Throckmorton,	ib.
On the late indecent liberties taken with the remains of Milton,	147
To Mrs. King,	ib.
The Judgment of the Poets,	ib.
Epitaph on Mrs. M. Higgins, of Weston,	148
The Retired Cat,	ib.
To the Nightingale,	149
Sonnet to W. Wilberforce, Esq.	ib.
Epigram,	ib.
To Dr. Austin,	ib.
Sonnet, addressed to William Hayley, Esq.	150
Catharina,	ib.
Sonnet to George Romney, Esq.	ib.
On receiving Hayley's picture,	ib.
On a plant of Virgin's-bower,	ib.
To my cousin, Anne Bodham,	151
To Mrs. Unwin,	ib.
To William Hayley, Esq.	ib.
On a Spaniel, called Beau, killing a bird,	ib.
Beau's Reply,	ib.
To Mary,	152
On the Ice Islands,	ib.
The Castaway,	153
Translations from Vincent Bourne.	
I. The Glow Worm,	ib.
II. The Jackdaw,	154

Page.

III. The Cricket, - - - - - - - - 154
IV. The Parrot, - - - - - - - - ib.
V. The Thracian, - - - - - - - - 155
VI. Reciprocal Kindness, - - - - - - ib.
VII. A Manual, - - - - - - - - - ib.
VIII. An Enigma, - - - - - - - - 156
IX. Sparrows self-domesticated, - - - - - ib.
X. Familiarity dangerous, - - - - - 157
XI. Invitation to the Red-breast, - - - - - ib.
XII. Strada's Nightingale, - - - - - - ib.
XIII. Ode on the death of a Lady, - - - - - ib.
XIV. The Cause Won, - - - - - - - 158
XV. The Silk Worm, - - - - - - - - ib.
XVI. The Innocent Thief, - - - - - - ib.
XVII. Denner's Old Woman, - - - - - - 159
XVIII. The Tears of a Painter, - - - - - ib.
XIX. The Maze, - - - - - - - - - ib.
XX. No Sorrow peculiar to the Sufferer, - - - ib.
XXI. The Snail, - - - - - - - - - ib.
The Contrite Heart, - - - - - - - - 160
The Shining Light, - - - - - - - - - ib.
Thirsting for God, - - - - - - - - - ib.
A Tale, - - - - - - - - - - - - ib.
Song on Peace, - - - - - - - - - - 161
Sonnet to John Johnson, - - - - - - - 162
Inscription on a grove of Oaks, - - - - - - ib.
Love Abused, - - - - - - - - - - ib.
Memorial for Ashley Cowper, Esq. - - - - - ib.
To the memory of John Thornton, Esq. - - - - ib.
To a Young Friend, - - - - - - - - 163
To the memory of Dr. Lloyd, - - - - - - ib.
Epitaph on Fop, a dog, - - - - - - - ib.

LETTERS.

Letter. Page.

1763.

1 To Lady Hesketh. Journals of the House of Lords; reflection on the singular temper of his mind, Aug. 9 164

1765.

2 To Joseph Hill, Esq. Account of his situation at Huntingdon, June 24 ib.
3 To Lady Hesketh. On his illness and subsequent recovery, July 1 165
4 To the same. Salutary effects of affliction on the human mind, July 4 ib.
5 To the same. Account of Huntingdon; distance from his brother, &c. July 5 166
6 To the same. Newton's Treatise on the Prophecies; reflections of Dr. Young on the truth of Christianity, July 12 167
7 To the same. On the beauty and sublimity of scriptural language, Aug. 1 ib.
8 To the same. Pearsall's Meditations; definition of faith, Aug. 17 168
9 To the same. On a particular providence; experience of mercy, &c. Sept. 4 169
10 To the same. First introduction to the Unwin family; their characters, Sept. 14 170
11 To the same. On the thankfulness of the heart, its inequalities, &c. Oct. 10 ib.
12 To the same. Miss Unwin, her character and piety, Oct. 18 ib.
13 To Major Cowper. Situation at Huntingdon; his perfect satisfaction, &c. Oct. 18 171
14 To Joseph Hill, Esq. On those who confine all merits to their own acquaintance, Oct. 25 172

1766.

15 To Lady Hesketh. On solitude; on the desertion of his friends, March 6 ib.
16 To Mrs. Cowper. Mrs. Unwin and her son; his cousin Martin Madan, March 12 173
17 To the same. Letters the fruit of friendship; his conversion, April 4 173
18 To the same. The probability of knowing each other in a future state, April 17 174
19 To he same. On the recollection of earthly affairs by departed spirits, April 18 175
20 To the same. On the same subject; on his own state of body and mind, Sept. 3 176
21 To the same. His manner of living; reasons for his not taking orders, Oct. 20 177

1767.

22 To the same. Reflections arising from reading Marshall, March 11 ib.
23 To the same. Introduction of Mr. Unwin's son; his gardening; on Marshall, March 14 178
24 To the same. On the motive of his introducing Mr. Unwin's son to her, April 3 ib.
25 To the same. Mr. Unwin's death; doubts concerning his future abode, July 13 179
26 To Joseph Hill, Esq. Reflections arising from Mr. Unwin's death, July 16 ib

1768.

27 To the same. On the occurrences during his visit at St. Alban's, July 16 ib.

1769.

28 To the same. On the difference of dispositions; his love of retirement, 180
29 To Mrs. Cowper. His new situation; reasons for the insufficiency of the world to confer happiness, ib.
30 To Mrs. Cowper. The consolations of religion on the death of her husband, Aug. 31 ib.

1770.

31 To the same. Dangerous illness of his brother, March 5 181
32 To the Rev. John Newton. Sickness and death of his brother, March 31 ib.
33 To J. Hill, Esq. Religious sentiments of his brother, May 8 182
34 To Mrs. Cowper. The same subject, June 7 ib.
35 To J. Hill, Esq. Expression of his gratitude for instances of friendship, Sept. 25 183
36 To the Rev. William Unwin. The same subject; of supplicatory letters, &c. June 8 ib.

1779.

37 To the same. Johnson's Lives of the Poets, May 26 184
38 To the same. His hot-house; tame pigeons; visit to Gayhurst, Sept. 21 ib.
39 To the same. Johnson's biography; his treatment of Milton, Oct. 31 ib.
40 To the same. Quick succession of human events; modern patriotism, Dec. 2 185

1780.

41 To the same. Burke's speech on the reformation; Nightingale and Glow-worm, Feb. 27 ib.
42 To the Rev. J. Newton. On the danger of innovation, March 18 186
43 To the Rev. W. Unwin. On keeping the Sabbath, March 28 ib.
44 To the same. Pluralities in the Church, April 6 187
45 To the Rev. J. Newton. Distinction between a traveled man, and a traveled gentleman, April 16 ib.
46 To the same. Serious reflections on rural scenery, May 3 188
47 To J. Hill, Esq. The Chancellor's (T——w's illness, May 6 ib.
48 To the Rev. W. Unwin. His passion for landscape drawing; modern politics, May 8 ib
49. To Mrs. Cowper. On her brother's death, May 10 189
50 To the Rev. J. Newton. Pedantry of commentators; Dr. Bentley, &c. May 10 190

Letter. Page.

51 To the Rev. W. Unwin. Danger of endeavouring to excel; versification of a thought, June 8 190
52 To the Rev. J. Newton. On the riots in 1780; danger of associations, June 12 191
53 To the Rev. W. Unwin. Latin verses on do. June 18 ib.
54 To the same. Robertson's History; Biographia Britannica, June 22 192
55 To the Rev. J. Newton. Ingenuity of slander; lace-makers' petition, June 23 ib.
56 To the Rev. W. Unwin. To touch and retouch, the secret of good writing; an epitaph, July 2 193
57 To J. Hill, Esq. Recommendation of the lace-makers' petition, July 8 194
58 To the Rev. W. Unwin. Translation of the Latin verses on the riots in 1780, July 11 ib.
59 To Mrs. Cowper. On the insensible progress of age, July 20 ib.
60 To the Rev. W. Unwin. Olney Bridge, July 27 195
61 To the Rev. J. Newton. A riddle, July 30 ib.
62 To the Rev. W. Unwin. Human nature not changed; a modern only an ancient in a different dress, Aug. 6 196
63 To the Rev. J. Newton. Escape of one of his hares, Aug. 21 ib.
64 To Mrs. Cowper. Lady Cowper's death; age a friend to the mind, Aug. 31 197
65 To the Rev. W. Unwin. Biographia; verses, parson and clerk, Sept. 3 ib.
66 To the same. On education, Sept. 7 198
67 To the same. Public schools, Sept. 17 199
68 To the same. On the same subject, Oct. 5 ib.
69 To Mrs. Newton. On Mr. Newton's arrival at Ramsgate, Oct. 5 200
70 To the Rev. W. Unwin. On a goldfinch starved to death in a cage, Nov. 9 ib.
71 To J. Hill, Esq. With the memorable law case between nose and eyes, Dec. 25 201
72 To the Rev. W. Unwin. With the same, Dec. ib.

1781.

73 To J. Hill, Esq. On metrical law cases; old age, Feb. 15 ib.
74 To the Rev. W. Unwin. Consolations on the asperity of a critic, April 2 202
75 To the same. Publication of his first volume, May 1 ib.
76 To Joseph Hill, Esq. On the composition and publication of his first volume, May 9 203
77 To the Rev. W. Unwin. Reasons for not showing his preface to Mr. Unwin, May 10 ib.
78 To the same. Delay of his publication; Vincent Bourne and his poems, May 23 204
79 To the same. Correction of his proofs; on his horsemanship, May 205
80 To the same. Mrs. Unwin's criticisms; a distinguishing providence, June 5 ib.
81 To the same. On the design of his poems; Mr. Unwin's bashfulness, June 24 206
82 To the same. Thanks for some rugs; on the fashion of wearing wigs, July 6 207
83 To the Rev. J. Newton. In rhyme; on his poetry, July 12 ib.
84 To the Rev. W. Unwin. Duty of submitting to injury; story of an Abbe, July 29 208
85 To the same. His poem, Retirement; Lady Austen's settling at Olney, Aug. 25 209
86 To the same. Brighton amusements; his projected authorship, Oct. 6 ib.
87 To Mrs. Cowper. His first volume; death of a friend, Oct. 19 210
88 To the Rev. W. Unwin. Brighton dissipation; education of young Unwin, Nov. 5 211

Letter. Page.

89 To the same. Origin and causes of social feeling, Nov. 26 211

1782.

90 To the same. Johnson's characters of Prior and Pope, Jan. 5 212
91 To the same. Danger of criticism to the taste; young Unwin's education, Jan. 17 213
92 To the Rev. J. Newton. His intended publication, Feb. 2 214
93 To the Rev. W. Unwin. On some verses of Lowth's; on the origin of his correspondence with Lady Austen, Feb. 9 215
94 To the Rev. J. Newton. Pleasures of authorship, Feb. 16 216
Character of Caraccioli, ib.
95 To the Rev. W. Unwin. Mr. Newton's preface; the dignity of authorship, Feb. 24 217
96 To Lord Thurlow. With his first volume of poems, Feb. 25 ib.
97 To the Rev. J. Newton. Thoughts on reproving kings, Feb. 218
98 To the same. Past and present politics, March 6 ib.
99 To the Rev. W. Unwin. On the newspapers, March 7 219
100 To the Rev. J. Newton. Mr. Newton's preface, and Johnson's criticisms, March 14 ib.
101 To the Rev. W. Unwin. Observations on religious characters, 220
102 To the same. On his own volume of poems; on his letter to the chancellor, March 18 221
103 To the Rev. W. Bull, March 24 ib.
104 To the Rev. W. Unwin. On the same subject as Letter 102, April 1 222
105 To the same. The dignity of the Latin language; on parenthesis, April 27 ib
106 To the same. Dr. Franklin's letter; providential escape of Captain Cook, May 27 223
107 To the same. On the anxiety of an author, June 12 224
108 To the same. Dispensations of Providence, July 16 ib.
109 To the same. Account of a viper in the green-house; poems of Madame Guion, Aug. 3 225
110 To Lady Austen. A billet and verses, Aug. 12 226
111 To the Rev. W. Bull, Oct. 27 227
112 To the Rev. W. Unwin. John Gilpin's feats, Nov. 4 ib.
113 To the same. On a charitable donation to the poor of Olney, Nov. 18 ib.
114 To the same. Dr. Beattie's translation of Madame Guion's poems, 228
115 To the Rev. W. Unwin. Mr. ——'s charity and benevolence, Jan. 19 229
116 To the Rev. J. Newton. Nations act under the direction of Providence, Feb. 8 ib.
117 To J. Hill, Esq. Favourable reception given to his poems, Feb. 13 & 20 ib.
118 To the same. Dr. Franklin's letter transcribed, Feb. 20 230
119 To the same. Nations like ants; etching of the Chancellor (Thurlow,) ib.
120 To the Rev. J. Newton. Reflections on the illness of a friend, April 5 ib.
121 To the same. On simplicity in preaching, May 5 231
122 To the Rev. W. Unwin. On a sermon of Paley's, May 12 ib.
123 To J. Hill, Esq. Loss of friends; a tax on long life, May 26 232
124 To the Rev. J. Newton. Death of Mrs. C. May 31 ib.
125 To the Rev. W. Unwin. Character of the Rev. Mr. Bull, June 8 ib.
126 To the Rev. J. Newton. On his ecclesiastical history; remarkable mists, June 12 233
127 To the same. On religious zeal, June 17 234

Letter. Page.

128 To the Rev. J. Newton. Translation of Mr. Newton's letter into Dutch, June 19 234
129 To the same. His love of home; styles of Robertson and Gibbon, July 27 ib.
130 To the Rev. W. Bull, Aug. 3 235
131 To the Rev. W. Unwin. On ballads; anecdote of his goldfinch, Aug. 4 ib.
132 To the same. Madame Guion's poems, Sept. 7 236
133 To the Rev. J. Newton. On his recovery from a fever; story of a clerk in a public office, Sept. 8 237
134 To the same. Description of a visit to Mr. ———, Sept. 23 ib.
135 To the Rev. W. Unwin. Philosophers happy; air balloons, Sept. 29 238
136 To the Rev. J. Newton. Tendency of the Gospel to promote the happiness of mankind, Oct. 6 239
137 To the same. On the American loyalists, Oct. 240
138 To J. Hill, Esq. Comforts of a winter evening, Oct. 20 241
139 To the Rev. W. Unwin. Reflections on the unkind behaviour of acquaintance, Nov. 10 ib.
140 To the same. The same subject; L'Estrange's Josephus, Nov. 24 242
141 To the same. Account of Mr. and Mrs. Throckmorton, ib.

1784.

142 To the same. East India Company's Charter, Jan. 3 243
143 To the Rev. J. Newton. Departure of the old year, Jan. 18 244
144 To the Rev. W. Unwin. State of departed spirits, Jan. 245
145 To the Rev. J. Newton. On East India affairs; Lines of Dr. Jortin translated, Jan. 25 246
146 To the same. Title and motto for a work of Mr. Newton's, Feb. ib.
147 To the same. Our forefathers not nervous; Adam, as he appeared in a dream, Feb. 10 247
148 To the Rev. W. Bull, Feb. 22 248
149 To the Rev. J. Newton. Secret charity at Olney; parliamentary debates, Feb. ib.
150 To the Rev. W. Unwin. Difficulty in writing to strangers, Feb. 29 ib.
151 To the Rev. J. Newton. On the Theological Miscellany; Caraccioli, March 8 249
152 To the same. Style and spirit of Mr. Newton's Apology; East India patronage, March 11 ib.
153 To the same. Works of Caraccioli, March 19 250
154 To the same. Visit of a Candidate, March 29 ib.
155 To the same. Danger of trifling with our Maker; earthquake in Calabria, April 251
156 To the Rev. W Unwin. Beattie and Blair; origin of language, April 5 252
157 To the same. Observations on Blair's Lectures, April 25 253
158 To the Rev. J. Newton. Difference of style between Beattie and Blair, April 26 ib.
159 To the Rev. W. Unwin. On face-painting, May 3 254
160 To the same. Declines writing a sequel to John Gilpin, May 8 255
161 To the Rev. J. Newton. Dr. Johnson's favourable opinion of his poems, May 22 256
162 To the same. Same subject, June 5 ib.
163 To the Rev. W. Unwin. Tax on candles, July 3 ib.
164 To the Rev. J. Newton. Mythology of the ancients; new taxes, July 5 257
165 To the Rev. W. Unwin. Vincent Bourne; Hume's Essay on Suicide, July 12 258
166 To the Rev. J. Newton. Madness sometimes humorous and sometimes whimsical, July 19 259
167 To the same. Pleasant situation of Lymington; Mr. Gilpin, July 28 ib.
168 To the Rev. W. Unwin. On the inhabitants of the islands in the Pacific Ocean, Aug. 14 260

Letter. Page.

169 To the Rev. J. Newton. Captain Cook's last voyage, Aug. 16 260
170 To the Rev. W. Unwin. Publication of the Task, Sept. 11 261
171 To J. Hill, Esq. Dr. Cotton truly a philosopher, Sept. 11 262
172 To the Rev. J. Newton. Effect of sounds, Sept. 18 ib.
173 To the Rev. W. Unwin. Punctuation of blank verse, Oct. 2 263
174 To the Rev. J. Newton. On unconnected thoughts; death of Captain Cook, Oct. 9 ib.
175 To the Rev. W. Unwin. The tendency of the Task, and of all his writings, Oct. 10 264
176 To the same. On his poem, Tirocinium, Oct. 20 265
177 To the Rev. J. Newton. Sandwich islanders, Oct. 30 266
178 To the Rev. W. Unwin. Reasons why an author may wish to keep his works secret, Nov. 1 267
179 To the Rev. W. Bull, Nov. 8 ib.
180 To Joseph Hill, Esq. On the death of his mother, Nov. 268
181 To the Rev. J. Newton. His poems, the Task and Tirocinium, Nov. 27 ib.
182 To the Rev. W. Unwin. Tirocinium, 1784, 269
183 To the same. His poems; picture of Lunardi, Nov. 29 ib.
184 To the Rev. J. Newton. On the titles to the different books of the Task, Dec. 13 270
185 To the Rev. W. Unwin. Inscription of Tirocinium; compliment to Bishop Bagot, Dec. 18 271
186 To the Rev. J. Newton. On his poem being called the Task, Dec. 24 ib.

1785.

187 To the Rev. W. Unwin. Death of Dr. Johnson, and an epitaph on him, Jan. 15 272
188 To the Rev. W. Unwin. On two small poems, the Poplar Field and the Rose, Feb. 7 273
189 To the same. Reflections on the impatience of authors, March 20 ib.
190 To the same. Celebrity of John Gilpin, April 30 274
191 To J. Hill, Esq. Description of his *boudoir* at Olney, June 25 275
192 To the Rev. W. Unwin. Account of a violent thunder storm, July 27 ib.
193 To the same. Dr. Johnson's Journal, Aug. 27 276
194 To Lady Hesketh. On her return to England, Oct. 12 277
195 To the Rev. W. Unwin. Translation of Homer, Oct. 22 278
196 To Lady Hesketh. Obligations to a friend not irksome; some account of his affairs, Nov. 9 ib
197 To the same. Disinterestedness of his affections, 280
198 To the Rev. Walter Bagot. Bishop Bagot's charge, Nov. 9 ib.
199 To the Rev. W. Unwin. Publishing his Homer by subscription, Dec. 24 ib.
200 To J. Hill, Esq. Same subject, Dec. 24 281
201 To the Rev. W. Unwin. Same subject; anecdotes of the poor at Olney, Dec. 31 ib.

1786.

202 To Lady Hesketh. Correcting his poems, Jan. 10 282
203 To the Rev. W. Unwin. On his visiting Lady Hesketh; on Homer, Jan. 14 ib.
204 To the Rev. W. Bagot. Translation of Homer, Jan. 15 283
205 To the same. Dr. Maty's opinion of the Task, Jan. 23 ib.
206 To Lady Hesketh. On receiving a snuff-box with portraits of his three hares, Jan. 31 284
207 To the same. On her promised visit to Olney, Feb. 9 285
208 To the same. Vexations attendant on a variety of criticisms; the Chancellor's promise, Feb. 11 ib.
209 To the same. On their expected meeting at Olney, Feb. 19 286
210 To the Rev. W. Bagot. Death of Mrs. Bagot, Feb. 27 287

Letter. Page.

211 To Lady Hesketh. Elisions in some instances allowable, March 6 287
212 To the Rev. W. Unwin. On the translation of Homer, March 13 288
213 To J. Hill, Esq. Same subject, April 5 289
214 To Lady Hesketh. On her postponing her visit; description of the vicarage, April 17 ib.
215 To the same. Her letters his comfort, April 24 290
216 To the same. Dr. Maty's critique on his Homer; description of his own feelings, May 8 ib.
217 To the same. Pain and pleasure on the sight of a long-absent friend, May 15 292
218 To the Rev. W. Bagot. Submission to the will of God; Horace's advice to authors, May 20 293
219 To Lady Hesketh. Gives up meeting her at Newport; lines in the Task; state of his nerves, May 25 294
220 To the same. Beauties of the spring; his spirits less depressed, May 29 295
221 To the same. His feelings on her expected arrival; Mr. and Mrs. Throckmorton, June 4 and 5 296
222 To J. Hill, Esq. His time much occupied by Homer; the Chancellor's illness, June 9 297
223 To the same. Lady Hesketh's visit, and the village of Weston, June 19 ib.
224 To the Rev. W. Unwin. The arrival of Lady Hesketh; residence in Olney; Latin books for young readers, July 3 ib.
225 To the Rev. W. Bagot. Revisal of his Homer, July 4 298
226 To the Rev. W. Unwin. On his Homer, Aug. 24 299
227 To the same. On his compositions, ib.
228 To the same. His state of mind; verses to Miss C. on her birth-day, 300
229 To the same. On declining to write on a subject proposed to him, ib.
230 Letter-writing, illustrated by a simile in rhyme; state of the nation, 301
231 To the same. On his poem of the Lily and the Rose, ib.
232 To the same. The poet Churchill, ib.
233 To the same. First poetry, a translated elegy of Tibullus, 302
234 To the Rev. W. Bagot. Milton's blank verse, and revisal of his Homer, Aug. 31 303
235 To J. Hill, Esq. Mischance that happened to part of his translation of Homer, Oct. 6 ib.
236 To the Rev. W. Bagot. Change of habitation, Nov. 17 ib.
237 To Lady Hesketh. A poet's hermitage, Nov. 26 304
238 To the same. On the death of Mr. Unwin, Dec. 4 305
239 To Robert Smith, Esq. (the present Lord Carrington.) On the same subject, Dec. 9 ib.
240 To Lady Hesketh. On the same subject, Dec. 9 306
241 To J. Hill, Esq. On the same subject, Dec. 9 ib.
242 To Lady Hesketh. On praise to a poet, Dec. 21 307

1787.

243 To the Rev. W. Bagot. Homer's description of slaughter; praise of the author and Mr. Unwin, Jan. 3 ib.
244 To Lady Hesketh. On Homer, and his song of the Rose, Jan. 8 ib.
245 To the same. Obliged by indisposition to suspend his Homer; on dreams, and a visit from Mr. Rose, Jan. 18 308
246 To Samuel Rose, Esq. His indisposition; Burns' Poems, July 24 309
247 To the same. On his reviving health; Barclay's Argenis and Burns, Aug. 27 ib.
248 To Lady Hesketh. On the family at Weston Hall, Aug. 30 310
249 To the same. Books he had read, Sept. 4 ib.
250 To the same. On a lady whom he met at the Hall, Sept. 15 ib.
251 To the same. On the Memoirs of Baron de Tott, Sept. 29 311
252 To S. Rose, Esq. On leaving the country after the death of his father, Oct. 19 ib
253 To Lady Hesketh. On a kitten and a leech, Nov. 10 312
254 To J. Hill, Esq. On his own studies, Nov. 16 ib.
255 To Lady Hesketh. Beauties of Weston; the clerk of Northampton; on a paper in the Mirror; anecdote of a beggar, Nov. 27 ib.
256 To the same. On his neighbours, Dec. 4 313
257 To the Rev. W. Bagot. On his Homer, and Bishop Bagot, Dec. 6 ib.
258 To Lady Hesketh. On a ball, and his translation, Dec. 10 314
259 To S. Rose, Esq. On his Homer; talents given by nature, Dec. 13 ib.

1788.

260 To Lady Hesketh. On verses by Mr. Merry; inoculation, Jan. 1 315
261 To the Rev. W. Bagot. On Bishop Bagot, and his Homer, Jan. 5 316
262 To Lady Hesketh. Reasons for writing few occasional poems; on a print of Bunbury's, Jan. 19 ib.
263 To the same. On his own anxiety, Jan. 30 317
264 To the same. On trouble as the portion of mortality; on reading a book of his Iliad to Mr. Greatheed, Feb. 1 ib.
265 To S. Rose, Esq. Improvement of time; on the reflection of Glaucus, Feb. 14 318
266 To Lady Hesketh. On his own melancholy; Hannah More, and Hastings's trial, Feb. 16 319
267 To the same. On Burke's invective, Feb. 22 ib.
268 To the same. A fox chase, March 3 320
269 To the same. On the book entitled, "The Manners of the Great," March 12 ib.
270 To General Cowper. On his poem upon the slave trade; the Morning Dream, a ballad, 321
271 To the Rev. W. Bagot. On "The Manners of the Great," and his Homer, March 19 ib.
272 To S. Rose, Esq. Depression of spirits; Dr. Clarke, March 29 322
273 To Lady Hesketh. On his poem upon the slave trade, March 31 ib.
274 To the same. Smollett's Don Quixote; on his friend Mr. Rowley, May 6 323
275 To J. Hill, Esq. Books that he had lost, May 8 ib.
276 To Lady Hesketh. On Mrs. Montague, May 12 ib.
277 To J. Hill, Esq. On two prints, Crazy Kate and the Lace-maker; bust of Paris, May 24 324
278 To Lady Hesketh. Same subject; Mrs. Montague, May 27 ib.
279 To the same. Sufferings from the east wind; extraordinary advertisement of a dancing-master, June 3 325
280 To J. Hill, Esq. Death of Ashley Cowper, Esq. June 8 ib.
281 To Lady Hesketh. On the same subject, June 10 ib.
282 To the same. On the same subject, June 15 326
283 To the Rev. W. Bagot. On scenes of horror, June 17 ib.
284 To S. Rose, Esq. On a dry season, June 23 327
285 To Lady Hesketh. On his own expectations; anecdote of his dog Beau, June 27 ib.
286 To the same. On the Lime Walk at Weston; account of living authors, July 26 328
287 To the same. Favourable reception of the Task; Mr. Bacon, the sculptor, Aug 9 ib.
288 To S. Rose, Esq. Solicitude for a friend, Aug. 18 329
289 To the same. On the oak called Judith; on improper fears, Sept. 11 ib.
290 To the same. A riddle; on finishing the Iliad; death of a bullfinch, Sept. 25 330

Letter. Page.

291 To S. Rose, Esq. Vincent Bourne; invitation to his friend, Nov. 30 330
292 To. J. Hill, Esq. Introduction of Mr. Rose, Dec. 2 331
293 To Robert Smith, Esq. Dec. 20 ib.

1789.

294 To S. Rose, Esq. On memory; Sir J. Hawkins, Jan. 19 ib.
295 To the same. On accidents, Jan. 24 ib.
296 To the Rev. W. Bagot. Progress in Homer, Jan. 29 332
297 To S. Rose, Esq. On Hawkins Brown, May 20 ib.
298 To the same. Cuckow clocks; Boswell's Tour, June 5 ib.
299 To the Rev. W. Bagot. Compliments on the marriage of his friend, June 16 333
300 To S. Rose, Esq. On Hawkins and Boswell, June 20 ib.
301 To Mrs. Throckmorton. Poetical talents of a friend; incidents at the Hall, July 18 ib.
302 To S. Rose, Esq. Improvement of time in early life, July 23 334
303 To the same. Mrs. Piozzi's Travels, Aug. 8 ib.
304 To the same. Variations in our summers; remark on Mr. J———, Sept. 24 ib.
305 To the same. On receiving several presents, a sportive imitation of the Odyssey, Oct. 4 335
306 To J. Hill, Esq. French revolution, Dec. 18 ib.
307 To the Rev. W. Bagot. On Villoison's Homer, ib.
308 To the same. The same subject, 336

1790.

309 To S. Rose, Esq. On his health; remarks on a passage in Homer, Jan. 3 ib.
310 To Lady Hesketh. On his kinsman's poem; expectation of the critics on his Homer, Jan. 23 337
311 To S. Rose, Esq. Bentley's remarks on Homer, Feb. 2 ib.
312 To Lady Hesketh. Verses to Mrs. Throckmorton, Feb. 9 ib.
313 To Mr. Johnson. Remarks of Mr. Fuseli on his poem, Feb. 11 338
314 To Lady Hesketh. Anxiety for a female relation; on receiving his mother's picture, Feb. 26 ib.
315 To Mrs Bodham. On his mother's picture, Feb. 27 ib.
316 To John Johnson, Esq. Praise of Mrs. Bodham; invitation to Weston, Feb. 28 339
317 To Lady Hesketh. On the Test Act, March 8 340
318 To S. Rose, Esq. Solicitude for his friend's health, March 11 ib.
319 To Mrs. Throckmorton. On a lady's remarks on his Homer, March 21 341
320 To Lady Hesketh. On the style he introduced in his translation of Homer, March 22 ib.
321 To J. Johnson, Esq. Remarks on Longinus, March 23 342
322 To the same. On Lavater; particular studies recommended, April 17 ib.
323 To Lady Hesketh. Completion of his translation, April 19 343
324 To the same. On pictures of both his parents, April 30 ib.
325 To Mrs. Throckmorton. Village incidents, May 10 ib.
326 To Lady Hesketh, May 28 344
327 To the same. On a poetical application, June 3 ib.
328 To J. Johnson, Esq. On particular studies, June 7 ib.
329 To S. Rose, Esq. On early marriages; a riddle, June 8 345
330 To Lady Hesketh. Reflections on seeing an old woman; inscriptions for a grove of oaks, June 17 ib.
331 To the Rev. W. Bagot. African serpents and ants; on Bishop Bagot's removal, June 22 346
332 To Mrs. Bodham. On letter-writing, June 29 ib.
333 To Lady Hesketh. Mrs. Unwin's illness; on the French revolution, July 7 347
334 To J. Johnson, Esq. Danger of music engrossing too much time, July 8 ib.
335 To the same. Cautions against an heedless inattention to friends, July 31 347
336 To Mr. Johnson. Mr. Fuseli's strictures on his Homer, Sept. 7 348
337 To Mrs. Bodham. Mr. Johnson's carrying his Homer to London, Sept. 9. ib.
338 To S. Rose, Esq. On his marriage; preface to Homer, Sept. 13 ib.
339 To Mr. Johnson. Mr. Newton's preface, &c. Oct. 3 349
340 To Mrs. Bodham. On the joys and sorrows of infancy, Nov. 21 ib.
341 To J. Johnson, Esq. Visit from the Dowager Lady Spencer, Nov. 26. ib.
342 To S. Rose, Esq. Prediction of future eminence in his profession, Nov. 30 350
343 To the Rev. W. Bagot. Translation of Homer; on the office of Poet Laureat, Dec. 1 ib.
344 To J. Johnson, Esq. King's College subscription; family of the Donnes, Dec. 18 351

1791.

345 To the Rev. W. Bagot. Long and short syllables in the English language, Jan. 4 ib.
346 To Mr. Johnson. On a line in one of his poems having been tampered with, ib.
347 To J. Johnson, Esq. Playful remarks on his character, Jan. 21 352
348 To S. Rose, Esq. His present of Pope's Homer, Feb. 5 ib.
349 To Lady Hesketh. Fame not an empty breath, Feb. 13 353
350 To the Rev. W. Bagot. Blank verse the English heroic, Feb. 26 ib.
351 To J. Johnson, Esq. On the subscriptions from Cambridge, Oxford, and the Scotch Universities, Feb. 27 ib.
352 To J. Hill, Esq. Preface to the translation of Homer, March 6 354
353 To the Rev. Mr. Hurdis. Invitation to Weston; Sir Thomas More, March 6 ib.
354 To J. Hill, Esq. Achilles in the attitude of a dancing-master, March 10 ib.
355 To the Rev. W. Bagot. On the critical talents of Dr. Johnson, March 18 ib.
356 To J. Johnson, Esq. On the poems of the Norwich maiden, March 19 355
357 To S. Rose, Esq. His Homer calculated at less than the 7th part of a farthing per line, March 24 ib.
358 To Lady Hesketh. God no more a respecter of wit than he is of persons, March 25 356
359 To Mrs. Throckmorton. Little success of application to the University of Oxford, April 1 ib.
360 To J. Johnson, Esq. Brilliant collection of names from Cambridge, April 6 357
361 To S. Rose, Esq. General success of the subscription, April 29 ib.
362 To the Rev. W. Bagot. Mr. Bagot; Milton's Poems, May 2 ib.
363 To the Rev. Mr. Buchanan, May 11 358
364 To Lady Hesketh. Letter from Dr. Cogswell, from New York, May 18 ib.
365 To J. Johnson, Esq. Translation of the Frogs and Mice, May 23 ib.
366 To Lady Hesketh. Delays of printers; confidence in government, May 27 ib.
367 To J. Johnson, Esq. On his procuring him the Cambridge subscriptions to his Homer, June 1 359
368 To the Rev. Mr. Hurdis. On the time of the publication of his Homer, June 13 ib.
369 To S. Rose, Esq. Man an ungrateful animal, June 15 360
370 To Dr. James Cogswell. On the Task, and his other poems, June 15

Letter. Page.

371 To the Rev. W. Bagot. Lady Bagot's visit to Weston, Aug. 2 361
372 To the Rev. Mr. Hurdis. On his mode of study at Weston, Aug. 9 ib.
373 To J. Johnson, Esq. On the subject of a new work, Aug. 9 362
374 To S. Rose, Esq. Translation of Milton's Italian and Latin Poems, Sept. 14 ib.
375 To the Rev. W. Bagot. Milton's Elegy on the death of the Bishop of Winchester, Sept. 21 ib.
376 To the same. Upon a poem of Lord Bagot's, Oct. 25 363
377 To J. Johnson, Esq. On his sister's recovery, Oct. 31 ib.
378 To J. Hill, Esq. On the antipathy to compound epithets, Nov. 14 ib.
379 To the Rev. W. Bagot. Translation of Homer and Milton, Dec. 5 364
380 To the Rev. Mr. Hurdis. On original composition and translation, Dec. 10 ib.
381 To S. Rose, Esq. Mrs. Unwin's illness, Dec. 21 365
1792.
382 To the Rev. W. Bagot. On his children's recovery, Feb. 14 ib.
383 To the Lord Thurlow. On his translation of Homer, 366
To William Cowper, Esq. from Lord Thurlow. On rhyme; on translation; his lordship's version of the speech of Achilles to Phœnix, ib.
384 To the Lord Thurlow. On the same subject, ib.
385 To the same. His satisfaction at his lordship's being pleased with his translation, 367
To William Cowper Esq. from Lord Thurlow. Blank verse fittest for a translation of Homer, 368
386 To the Rev. Mr. Hurdis. Acknowledgment of his friendly remarks on Homer, Feb. 21 ib.
387 To the same. Continuation of the same, March 2 ib.
388 To J. Johnson, Esq. Mildness of the Spring, March 11 369
389 To the Rev. Mr. Hurdis. On his tragedy of Sir Thomas More, March 23 ib.
390 To Lady Hesketh. On receiving the first letter from Mr. Hayley, March 25 ib.
391 To S. Rose, Esq. On a poem of Mr. Park's, March 30 370
392 To the same. Printers tiresome, April 5 ib.
393 To W. Hayley, Esq. Invitation to Weston; character of Mrs. Unwin, April 6 ib.
394 To the Rev. Mr. Hurdis. Comparison of his unanswered letters with the leaves in autumn, April 8 371
395 To Lady Throckmorton. On appropriating the productions of others to ourselves; on calumniation; sonnet to Mr. Wilberforce, April 16 ib.
396 To the Rev. J. Jekyll Rye. Abhorrence of the slave trade, April 16 372
397 To Lady Hesketh. With some lines to Warren Hastings, May 5 ib.
398 To J. Johnson, Esq. On the subject of his ordination, May 20 373
399 To Lady Hesketh. Mrs. Unwin's second attack, May 24 ib.
400 To the same. The same subject, May 26 374
401 To Mrs. Bodham. On the subject of early ordination, June 4 ib.
402 To William Hayley, Esq. On Mrs. Unwin's amended health, June 4 ib.
403 To the same. Same subject, June 5 ib.
404 To the same. His attachment to Mr. Hayley, and his own melancholy, June 7 375
405 To the same. Resignation of Mrs. Unwin; a poem to Dr. Darwin, June 10 ib.
406 To Lady Hesketh. Mrs. Unwin's gradual recovery, June 11 376
407 To W. Hayley, Esq. On the projected visit to Eartham, June 19 ib.

Letter. Page.

408 To the same. Same subject; lines to Catharina, June 27 376
409 To the same. Upon the life of Milton, July 4 377
410 To the same. On Abbott's picture of him, July 15 ib.
411 To the same. The day fixed for their journey to Eartham, July 22 ib.
412 To the same. Fears and distresses before setting out; his picture finished, July 29 378
413 To the Rev. Mr. Greatheed. Description of Eartham; the journey thither, Aug. 6 ib.
414 To Mrs. Courtenay. Same subject, Aug. 12 379
415 To S. Rose, Esq. Wishes him at Eartham, Aug. 14 ib.
416 To the same. Same subject, Aug. 13 380
417 To Mrs. Courtenay. Manner of spending his time at Eartham; epitaph on Fop, Aug. 25 ib.
418 To Lady Hesketh. Improvement in his health; his portrait by Romney, Aug. 26 ib.
419 To the Rev. Mr. Hurdis. On the death of his sister; invitation to Eartham, Aug. 26 381
420 To the same. On the beautiful scenery of Eartham; regrets on leaving it, Sept. 9 ib.
421 To W. Hayley, Esq. Account of his journey, Sept. 18 382
422 To the same. Same subject, Sept. 21 ib.
423 To the same. His spirits sink on the approach of winter, Oct. 2 ib.
424 To the same. Full of affectionate regard; on Hayley's verses to Dr. Austin, Oct. 13 383
425 To J. Johnson, Esq. Regret for his absence; sonnet to Romney, Oct. 19 ib.
426 To the same Moral reflection on sitting for a picture, Oct. 22 ib.
427 To W. Hayley, Esq. Difficulty of exertion; sonnet to Romney, Oct. 28 384
428 To S. Rose, Esq. Compliment on his professional industry; hopes of future success, Nov. 9 ib.
429 To J. Johnson, Esq. Difficulty in commencing his Milton; lowness of spirits, Nov. 20 ib.
430 To W. Hayley, Esq. Same subject, Nov. 25 385
431 To J. Hill, Esq. Politics of the day, Dec. 16 ib.
432 To W. Hayley, Esq. On his confinement in consequence of his translating Milton, Dec. 26 386
1793.
433 To the Rev. W. Hurdis. On the illness of Miss Hurdis, Jan. 6 ib.
434 To W. Hayley, Esq. On the arrival of Mr. Hayley's picture, Jan. 20 ib.
435 To the same. On the death of a friend, Jan. 29 387
436 To S. Rose, Esq. His translation of Homer, Feb. 5 ib.
437 To Lady Hesketh. Toryism of Lady Hesketh and Mrs. Rose, Feb. 10 ib.
438 To S. Rose, Esq. On the Analytical Review of his Homer, Feb. 17 ib.
439 To the Rev. Mr. Hurdis. Professorship of poetry; discoveries in natural history, Feb. 23 388
440 To W. Hayley, Esq. His dream respecting Milton, Feb. 24 ib.
441 To the Rev. W. Bagot Republicans of France, March 4 389
442 To Mr. Thomas Hayley. On Mr. Thomas Hayley's strictures on his Homer, March 14 ib.
443 To W. Hayley, Esq. Revisal of his Homer, March 19 390
444 To S. Rose, Esq. Revised translation of Homer, March 27 ib.
445 To J. Johnson, Esq. Mr. Johnson's resolution to take holy orders, April 11 ib.
446 To W. Hayley, Esq. On the notes to his Homer, April 23 391
447 To the Rev. W. Bagot. On the death of those we love, May 4 ib
448 To S. Rose, Esq. On the notes of his Homer, May 5 ib.

Letter.		Page.
449	To Lady Hesketh. Toryism of Lady Hesketh, May 7	392
450	To W. Hayley, Esq. Distribution of his time, May 21	ib.
451	To Lady Hesketh. With his verses to a young friend on his arrival at Cambridge wet, when no rain had fallen there, June 1	393
452	To W. Hayley, Esq. On the proposal of a joint composition, June 29	ib.
453	To the same. On his projected poem of the Four Ages, July 7	ib.
454	To the Rev. Mr. Greatheed. On Mr. Greatheed's invitation, July 23	394
455	To W. Hayley, Esq. Improvements in his garden, July 24	ib.
456	To Mrs. Charlotte Smith. July 25	395
457	To Lady Hesketh. On his lines and acknowledgments to Miss Fanshaw, Aug. 11	ib.
458	To W. Hayley, Esq. On his new buildings and improvements, Aug. 15	ib
459	To Mrs. Courtenay. The treatment of Bob Archer by a roguish fiddler, Aug. 20	396
460	To S. Rose, Esq. Notes to his Homer, Aug. 22	ib.
461	To W. Hayley, Esq. On Flaxman's monument to Lord Mansfield, Aug. 27	397
462	To Lady Hesketh. On Lady Hesketh's visit to Weston, Aug. 29	ib.
463	To the Rev. John Johnson. Mr. Johnson's present of a sun-dial, Sept. 6	398
464	To W. Hayley, Esq. On his affected mirth and real melancholy, Sept. 8	ib.
465	To Mrs. Courtenay. On Mr. Johnson's present of a sun-dial, Sept. 15	ib.
466	To the Rev. J. Johnson. On Mr. Johnson's visit to Weston, Sept. 29	399
467	To W. Hayley, Esq. On the visits and civilities which wasted his time, Oct. 5	ib.
468	To the same. On Mr. Hayley and his son's visit to Weston, Oct. 18	400
469	To the Rev. J. Jekyll Rye. On Mr. Hurdis's election to the Professorship of poetry at Oxford, Nov. 3	ib.
470	To Mrs. Courtenay. Mr. Hayley's visit, Nov. 4	ib.
471	To J. Hill, Esq. Beauties of Weston, Nov. 5	401
472	To the Rev. W. Bagot. Reflections on the French Revolution, Nov. 10	ib.
473	To the Rev. Mr. Hurdis. On Hayley's Life of Milton, his own commentary, Nov. 24	ib
474	To S. Rose, Esq. Subjects for painting recommended; idea of a joint work with Hayley, Nov. 29	402
475	To the same. Thanking him for books; Jonathan Wild; Man as he is, Dec. 8	ib.
476	To W. Hayley, Esq. Uneasy at not hearing from him; plan of continuing the Four Ages, Dec. 8	ib.
477	To the same. Criticism on the address of Hector to his son, Dec. 17	403
	1794.	
478	To the same. Same subject, Jan. 5	ib.
	1798.	
479	To Lady Hesketh, Oct. 13	404

SKETCH

OF THE

LIFE OF WILLIAM COWPER, ESQ.

OF THE INNER TEMPLE.

William Cowper was born at Berkhamstead, Herts, November 26, 1731. His father, the rector of the parish, was the reverend John Cowper, D. D., son of Spencer Cowper, one of the justices of the common pleas, a younger brother of the lord chancellor Cowper. He received his early education at a school in his native county, whence he was removed to that of Westminster. Here he adquired a competent portion of classical knowledge; but, from the delicacy of his temperament, and the timid shyness of his disposition, he seems to have endured a species of martyrdom from the rudeness and tyranny of his more robust companions, and to have received, indelibly, the impressions that subsequently produced his Tirocinium, in which poem his dislike to the system of public education in England is very strongly stated. On leaving Westminster, he was articled, for three years, to an eminent attorney, during which time he appears to have paid very little attention to his profession; nor did he alter on this point after his entry at the Temple, in order to qualify himself for the honourable and lucrative place of clerk to the house of lords, which post his family interest had secured for him. While he resided in the Temple, he appears to have been rather gay and social in his intercourse, numbering among his companions Lloyd, Churchill, Thornton and Colman, all of whom had been his companions at Westminster school, and the two latter of whom he assisted with some papers in the Connoisseur. His natural disposition, however, remained timid and diffident, and his spirits so constitutionally infirm, that, when the time arrived for his assuming the post to which he had been destined, he was thrown into such unaccountable terror at the idea of making his appearance before the assembled peerage, that he was not only obliged to resign the appointment, but was precipitated, by his agitation of spirits, into a state of great mental disorder. At this period, he was led into a deep consideration of his religious state; and, having imbibed the doctrine of election and reprobation in its most appalling rigor, he was led to a very dismal state of apprehension. We are told, "that the terror of eternal judgment overpowered and actually disordered his faculties; and he remained seven months in a continual expectation of being instantly plunged into eternal misery." In this shocking condition, confinement became necessary, and he was placed in a receptacle for lunatics, kept by the amiable and well-known doctor Cotton of St. Alban's. At length, his mind recovered a degree of serenity, and he retired to Huntingdon, where he formed an acquaintance with the family of the reverend Mr. Unwin, which ripened into the strictest intimacy. In 1773, he was again assailed by religious despondency, and endured a partial alienation of mind for some years, during which affliction he was highly indebted to the affectionate care of Mrs. Unwin. In 1778, he again recovered; in 1780, he was persuaded to translate some of the spiritual songs of the celebrated madame Guion. In the same and the following year, he was also induced to prepare a volume of poems for the press, which was printed in 1782. This volume did not attract any great degree of public attention. The principal topics are, Error, Truth, Expostulation, Hope, Charity, Retirement and Conversation; all of which are treated with originality, but, at the same time, with a portion of religious austerity, which, without some very striking recommendation, was not, at that time, of a nature to acquire popularity. They are in rhymed heroics; the style being rather strong than poetical, although never flat or insipid. A short time before the publication of this volume, Mr. Cowper became acquainted with lady Austen, widow of sir Robert Austen, who subsequently

resided, for some time, at the parsonage-house at Olney. To the influence of this lady, the world is indebted for the exquisitely humorous ballad of John Gilpin, and the author's master-piece, the Task. The latter admirable poem chiefly occupied his second volume, which was published in 1785, and rapidly secured universal admiration. The Task unites minute accuracy with great elegance and picturesque beauty; and, after Thomson, Cowper is probably the poet who has added most to the stock of natural imagery. The moral reflections in this poem are also exceedingly impressive, and its delineation of character abounds in genuine nature. His religious system, too, although discoverable, is less gloomily exhibited in this than in his other productions. This volume also contained his Tirocinium—a piece strongly written, and abounding with striking observations, whatever may be thought of its decision against public education. About the year 1784, he began his version of Homer, which, after many impediments, appeared in July, 1791. This work possesses much exactness, as to sense, and is certainly a more accurate representation of Homer than the version of Pope; but English blank verse can not sufficiently sustain the less poetical parts of Homer, and the general effect is bald and prosaic. Disappointed at the reception of this laborious work, he meditated a revision of it, as also the superintendence of an edition of Milton, and a new didactic poem, to be entitled the Four Ages; but, although he occasionally wrote a few verses, and revised his Odyssey, amidst his glimmerings of reason, those and all other undertakings finally gave way to a relapse of his malady. His disorder extended, with little intermission to the close of life; which, melancholy to relate, ended in a state of absolute despair. In 1794, a pension of 300*l.* per annum was granted him by the crown. In the beginning of 1800, this gifted, but afflicted man of genius, exhibited symptoms of dropsy, which carried him off on the 25th of April following. Since his death, Cowper has, by the care and industry of his friend and biographer, Hayley, become known to the world, as one of the most easy and elegant letter-writers on record.

THE WORKS

OF

WILLIAM COWPER, ESQ.

OF THE INNER TEMPLE.

Table Talk.

" Si te fortè meæ gravis uret sarcina chartæ,
Abjicito—— *Hor.* Lib. 1. Epist. 13.

A. YOU told me, I remember, glory, built
On selfish principles, is shame and guilt;
The deeds that men admire as half divine,
Stark naught, because corrupt in their design.
Strange doctrine this! that without scruple tears
The laurel, that the very lightning spares;
Brings down the warrior's trophy to the dust,
And eats into his bloody sword like rust.

B. I grant that, men continuing what they are,
Fierce, avaricious, proud, there must be war;
And never meant the rule should be applied
To him, that fights with justice on his side.
Let laurels drenched in pure Parnassian dews,
Reward his memory, dear to every muse,
Who, with a courage of unshaken root,
In Honour's field advancing his firm foot,
Plants it upon the line that Justice draws,
And will prevail or perish in her cause.
'Tis to the virtues of such men, man owes
His portion in the good that Heaven bestows.
And when recording History displays
Feats of renown, though wrought in ancient days,
Tells of a few stout hearts, that fought and died,
Where duty placed them, at their country's side;
The man, that is not moved with what he reads,
That takes not fire at their heroic deeds,
Unworthy of the blessings of the brave,
Is base in kind, and born to be a slave.
But let eternal infamy pursue
The wretch to nought but his ambition true,
Who, for the sake of filling with one blast
The post-horns of all Europe, lays her waste.
Think yourself stationed on a towering rock,
To see a people scattered like a flock,
Some royal mastiff panting at their heels,
With all the savage thirst a tiger feels;
Then view him self-proclaimed in a gazette
Chief monster that has plagued the nations yet:
The globe and sceptre in such hands misplaced,
Those ensigns of dominion, how disgraced!
The glass, that bids man mark the fleeting hour,
And Death's own scythe would better speak his power;
Then grace the bony phantom in their stead
With the king's shoulder-knot and gay cockade;
Clothe the twin brethren in each other's dress,
The same their occupation and success.

A. 'Tis your belief the world was made for man;
Kings do but reason on the self-same plan:
Maintaining yours, you cannot theirs condemn,
Who think, or seem to think, man made for them.

B. Seldom, alas! the power of logic reigns
With much sufficiency in royal brains;
Such reasoning falls like an inverted cone,
Wanting its proper base to stand upon.
Man made for kings! those optics are but dim,
That tell you so—say, rather, they for him.
That were indeed a king-ennobling thought,
Could they, or would they, reason as they ought.
The diadem, with mighty projects lined,
To catch renown by ruining mankind,
Is worth, with all its gold and glittering store,
Just what the toy will sell for, and no more.
Oh! bright occasions of dispensing good,
How seldom used, how little understood!
To pour in Virtue's lap her just reward;
Keep Vice restrained behind a double guard

To quell the faction, that affronts the throne,
By silent magnanimity alone;
To nurse with tender care the thriving arts;
Watch every beam Philosophy imparts;
To give Religion her unbridled scope,
Nor judge by statute a believer's hope;
With close fidelity and love unfeigned,
To keep the matrimonial bond unstained;
Covetous only of a virtuous praise;
His life a lesson to the land he sways;
To touch the sword with conscientious awe,
Nor draw it but when duty bids him draw;
To sheathe it in the peace-restoring close,
With joy beyond what victory bestows;—
Blest country, where these kingly glories shine!
Blest England, if this happiness be thine!

A. Guard what you say, the patriotic tribe
Will sneer, and charge you with a bribe—

B. A bribe?
The worth of his three kingdoms I defy,
To lure me to the baseness of a lie:
And, of all lies (be that one poet's boast,)
The lie that flatters I abhor the most.
Those arts be theirs, who hate his gentle reign;
But he that loves him has no need to feign.

A. Your smooth eulogium to one crown addrest,
Seems to imply a censure on the rest.

B. Quevedo, as he tells his sober tale,
Asked, when in hell, to see the royal jail;
Approved their method in all other things:
But where, good sir, do you confine your kings?
There—said his guide—the group is full in view.
Indeed?—replied the don—there are but few.
His black interpreter the charge disdained—
Few, fellow?—there are all that ever reigned.
Wit, undistinguishing, is apt to strike
The guilty and not guilty both alike:
I grant the sarcasm is too severe,
And we can readily refute it here;
While Alfred's name, the father of his age,
And the sixth Edward's grace th' historic page.

A. Kings then, at last, have but the lot of all:
By their own conduct they must stand or fall.

B. True. While they live, the courtly laureat pays
His quitrent ode, his peppercorn of praise;
And many a dunce, whose fingers itch to write,
Adds, as he can, his tributary mite.
A subject's faults a subject may proclaim,
A monarch's errors are forbidden game!
Thus, free from censure, overawed by fear,
And praised for virtues that they scorn to wear,
The fleeting forms of majesty engage
Respect, while stalking o'er life's narrow stage;
Then leave their crimes for history to scan,
And ask, with busy scorn, was this the man?
I pity kings, whom Worship waits upon
Obsequious from the cradle to the throne;
Before whose infant eyes the flatterer bows,
And binds a wreath about their baby brows;
Whom Education stiffens into state,
And Death awakens from that dream too late.
Oh! if Servility, with supple knees,
Whose trade it is to smile, to crouch, to please;
If smooth Dissimulation, skilled to grace
A devil's purpose with an angel's face;
If smiling peeresses, and simpering peers,
Encompassing his throne a few short years;
If the gilt carriage and the pampered steed,
That wants no driving, and disdains the lead;
If guards, mechanically formed in ranks,
Playing, at beat of drum, their martial pranks,
Shouldering and standing as if struck to stone,
While condescending majesty looks on!
If monarchy consist in such base things,
Sighing, I say again, I pity kings!
To be suspected, thwarted, and withstood,
E'en when he labours for his country's good;
To see a band called patriot for no cause,
But that they catch at popular applause,
Careless of all th' anxiety he feels,
Hook disappointment on the public wheels;
With all their flippant fluency of tongue,
Most confident when palpably most wrong;
If this be kingly, then farewell for me
All kingship; and may I be poor and free!
To be the table talk of clubs up-stairs,
To which th' unwashed artificer repairs,
T' indulge his genius after long fatigue,
By diving into cabinet intrigue;
(For what kings deem a toil, as well they may,
To him is relaxation and mere play;)
To win no praise when well-wrought plans prevail.
But to be rudely censured when they fail;
To doubt the love his favourites may pretend,
And in reality to find no friend;
If he indulge a cultivated taste,
His galleries with the works of art well graced,
To hear it called extravagance and waste;
If these attendants, and if such as these,
Must follow royalty, then welcome ease;
However humbled and confined the sphere,
Happy the state that has not these to fear.

A. Thus men, whose thoughts contemplative have dwelt
On situations that they never felt,
Start up sagacious, covered with the dust,
Of dreaming study and pedantic rust,
And prate and preach about what others prove,
As if the world and they were hand and glove.
Leave kingly backs to cope with kingly cares;
They have their weight to carry, subjects theirs,
Poets, of all men, ever least regret
Increasing taxes and the nation's debt.
Could you contrive the payment, and rehearse
The mighty plan, oracular, in verse,

No bard, howe'er majestic, old or new,
Should claim my fixed attention more than you.
B. Not Brindley nor Bridgewater would essay
To turn the course of Helicon that way;
Nor would the Nine consent the sacred tide
Should purl amidst the traffic of Cheapside,
Or tinkle in 'Change Alley, to amuse
The leathern ears of stockjobbers and Jews.
A. Vouchsafe, at least, to pitch the key of rhyme
To themes more pertinent, if less sublime.
When ministers and ministerial arts;
Patriots, who love good places at their hearts;
When admirals, extolled for standing still,
Or doing nothing with a deal of skill;
Gen'rals, who will not conquer when they may,
Firm friends to peace, to pleasure, and good pay;
When Freedom, wounded almost to despair,
Though Discontent alone can find out where;
When themes like these employ the poet's tongue,
I hear as mute as if a syren sung.
Or tell me, if you can, what power maintains,
A Briton's scorn of arbitrary chains:
That were a theme might animate the dead,
And move the lips of poets cast in lead.
B. The cause, tho' worth the search, may yet elude
Conjecture and remark, however shrewd.
They take perhaps a well-directed aim,
Who seek it in his climate and his frame.
Liberal in all things else, yet Nature here
With stern severity deals out the year,
Winter invades the spring, and often pours
A chilling flood on summer's drooping flowers;
Unwelcome vapours quench autumnal beams,
Ungenial blasts attending curl the streams:
The peasants urge their harvest, ply the fork
With double toil, and shiver at their work;
Thus with a rigour for his good designed,
She rears her favourite man of all mankind.
His form robust and of elastic tone,
Proportioned well, half muscle and half bone,
Supplies with warm activity and force
A mind well lodged, and masculine of course.
Hence Liberty, sweet Liberty inspires
And keeps alive his fierce but noble fires.
Patient of constitutional control,
He bears it with meek manliness of soul;
But if Authority grow wanton, wo
To him that treads upon his free-born toe;
One step beyond the boundary of the laws
Fires him at once in Freedom's glorious cause.
Thus proud Prerogative, not much revered,
Is seldom felt, though sometimes seen and heard;
And in his cage, like parrot fine and gay,
Is kept to strut, look big, and talk away.
Born in a climate softer far than ours,
Not formed, like us, with such Herculean powers,
The Frenchman, easy, debonair, and brisk,
Give him his lass, his fiddle, and his frisk,
Is alwas happy, reign whoever may,
And laughs the sense of misery far away.
He drinks his simple beverage with a gust;
And, feastlng on an onion and a crust,
We never feel th' alacrity and joy
With which he shouts and carols *Vive la Roi*,
Filled with as much true merriment and glee,
As if he heard his king say—Slave, be free.
Thus happiness depends, as Nature shows,
Less on exterior things than most suppose,
Vigilant over all that he has made,
Kind Providence attends with gracious aid;
Bids equity throughout his works prevail,
And weighs the nations in an even scale;
He can encourage Slavery to a smile,
And fill with discontent a British isle.
A. Freeman, and slave then, if the case be such,
Stand on a level; and you prove too much:
If all men indiscriminately share
His fostering power, and tutelary care,
As well be yoked by Despotism's hand,
As dwell at large in Britain's chartered land.
B. No. Freedom has a thousand charms to show,
That slaves, howe'er contented, never know.
The mind attains beneath her happy reign,
The growth, that Nature meant she should attain;
The varied fields of science, ever new,
Opening and wider opening on her view,
She ventures onward with a prosperous force,
While no base fear impedes her in her course.
Religion, richest favour of the skies,
Stands most revealed before the freeman's eyes;
No shades of superstition blot the day,
Liberty chases all that gloom away:
The soul emancipated, unoppprest,
Free to prove all things, and hold fast the best,
Learns much; and to a thousand listening minds
Communicates with joy the good she finds:
Courage in arms, and ever prompt to show
His manly forehead to the fiercest foe;
Glorious in war, but for the sake of peace,
His spirits rising as his toils increase,
Guards well what arts and industry have won,
And Freedom claims him for her first-born son.
Slaves fight for what were better cast away—
The chains that binds them, and a tyrant's sway·
But they that fight for freedom, undertake
The noblest cause mankind can have at stake:—
Religion, virtue, truth, whate'er we call
A blessing—freedom is the pledge of all.
O Liberty! the prisoner's pleasing dream,
The poet's muse, his passion, and his theme;
Genius is thine, and thou art Fancy's nurse;
Lost without th' ennobling powers of verse;
Heroic song from thy free touch acquires
Its clearest tone, the rapture it inspires:
Place me where Winter breathes his keenest air,
And I will sing, if Liberty be there;

And I will sing at Liberty's dear feet,
In Afric's torrid clime, or India's fiercest heat.

A. Sing where you please; in such a cause I grant
An English poet's privilege to rant;
But is not Freedom—at least is not ours
Too apt to play the wanton with her powers,
Grow freakish, and, o'erleaping every mound,
Spread anarchy and terror all around?

B. Agreed. But would you sell or slay your horse
For bounding and curveting in his course?
Or if, when ridden with a careless rein,
He break away, and seek the distant plain?
No. His high mettle, under good control,
Gives him Olympic speed, and shoots him to the goal.

Let discipline employ her wholesome arts;
Let magistrates alert perform their parts;
Not skulk or put on a prudential mask,
As if their duty were a desperate task;
Let active laws apply the needful curb,
To guard the peace that Riot would disturb;
And Liberty, preserved from wild excess,
Shall raise no feuds for armies to suppress.
When Tumult lately burst his prison-door,
And set plebeian thousands in a roar;
When he usurped Authority's just place
And dared to look his master in the face
When the rude rabble's watch-word was—Destroy,
And blazing London seemed a second Troy;
Liberty blushed and hung her drooping head,
Beheld their progress with the deepest dread;
Blushed, that effects like these she should produce,
Worse than the deeds of galley-slaves broke loose.
She loses in such storms her very name,
And fierce Licentiousness should bear the blame.

Incomparable gem! thy worth untold;
Cheap though blood-bought, and thrown away when sold;
May no foes ravish thee, and no false friend
Betray thee, while professing to defend!
Prize it, ye ministers; ye monarchs, spare;
Ye Patriots, guard it with a miser's care.

A. Patriots, alas! the few that have been found
Where most they flourish, upon English ground,
The country's need have scantily supplied,
And the last left the scene, when Chatham died.

B. Not so—the virtue still adorns our age,
Though the chief actor died upon the stage.
In him Demosthenes was heard again;
Liberty taught him her Athenian strain;
She clothed him with authority and awe,
Spoke from his lips, and in his looks gave law.
His speech, his form, his action, full of grace,
And all his country beaming in his face,
He stood, as some inimitable hand
Would strive to make a Paul or Tully stand.
No sycophant or slave, that dared oppose
Her sacred cause, but trembled when he rose;
And every venal stickler for the yoke
Felt himself crushed at the first word he spoke.

Such men are raised to station and command,
When Providence means mercy to a land,
He speaks, and they appear; to him they owe
Skill to direct, and strength to strike the blow;
To manage with address, to seize with power
The crisis of a dark decisive hour;
So Gideon earned a victory not his own;
Subserviency his praise, and that alone.

Poor England! thou art a devoted deer,
Beset with every ill but that of fear.
The nations hunt; all mark thee for a prey;
They swarm around thee, and thou stand'st at bay,
Undaunted still, though wearied and perplexed;
Once Chatham saved thee; but who saves thee next?
Alas! the tide of pleasure sweeps along
All, that should be the boast of British song.
'Tis not the wreath, that once adorned thy brow,
The prize of happier times, will serve thee now
Our ancestry, a gallant, chieftain race,
Patterns of every virtue, every grace,
Confessed a God; they kneeled before they fought,
And praised him in the victories he wrought.
Now from the dust of ancient days bring forth
Their sober zeal, integrity, and worth;
Courage, ungraced by these, affronts the skies,
Is but the fire without the sacrifice.
The stream, that feeds the wellspring of the heart
Not more invigorates life's noblest part,
Than virtue quickens, with a warmth divine,
The powers, that Sin has brought to a decline.

A. Th' inestimable Estimate of Brown
Rose like a paper kite, and charmed the town;
But measures, planned and executed well,
Shifted the wind that raised it, and it fell.
He trod the very self-same ground you tread,
And victory refuted all he said.

B. And yet his judgment was not framed amiss
Its error, if it erred, was merely this—
He thought the dying hour already come,
And a complete recovery struck him dumb.

But that effeminacy, folly, lust,
Enervate and enfeeble, and needs must;
And that a nation shamefully debased,
Will be despised and trampled on at last,
Unless sweet Penitence her powers renew;
Is truth, if history itself be true.
There is a time, and Justice marks the date,
For long-forbearing Clemency to wait;
That hour elapsed, the incurable revolt
Is punished, and down comes the thunderbolt.
If Mercy then put by the threat'ning blow,
Must she perform the same kind office *now?*

May she! and, if offended Heaven be still
Accessible, and prayer prevail, she will.
'Tis not, however, insolence and noise,
The tempest of tumultuary joys,
Nor is it yet despondence and dismay
Will win her visits, or engage her stay;
Prayer only, and the penitential tear,
Can call her smiling down, and fix her here.

But when a country (one that I could name)
In prostitution sinks the sense of shame:
When infamous Venality, grown bold,
Writes on his bosom, *to be let or sold;*
When Perjury, that Heaven-defying vice,
Sells oaths by tale, and at the lowest price;
Stamps God's own name upon a lie just made,
To turn a penny in the way of trade;
When Avarice starves (and never hides his face)
Two or three millions of the human race,
And not a tongue inquires, how, where, or when,
Though conscience will have twinges now and then;
When profanation of the sacred cause
In all its parts, times, ministry, and laws,
Bespeaks a land, once Christian, fallen and lost,
In all, that wars against the title most;
What follows next let cities of great name,
And regions long since desolate proclaim.
Nineveh, Babylon, and ancient Rome,
Speak to the present time, and times to come;
They cry aloud, in every careless ear,
Stop, while ye may; suspend your mad career;
O learn from our example and our fate,
Learn wisdom and repentance, ere too late.

Not only Vice disposes and prepares
The mind, that slumbers sweetly in her snares,
To stoop to Tyranny's usurped command,
And bend her polished neck beneath his hand,
(A dire effect, by one of Nature's laws,
Unchangeably connected with its cause;)
But Providence himself will intervene,
To throw his dark displeasure o'er the scene.
All are his instruments; each form of war,
What burns at home, or threatens from afar,
Nature in arms, her elements at strife,
The storms, that overset the joys of life,
Are but the rods to scourge a guilty land,
And waste it at the bidding of his hand.
He gives his word, and Mutiny soon roars
In all her gates, and shakes her distant shores;
The standards of all nations are unfurled;
She has one foe, and that one foe the world:
And, if he doom that people with a frown,
And mark them with a seal of wrath pressed down,
Obduracy takes place; callous and tough,
The reprobated race grows judgment-proof:
Earth shakes beneath them, and Heaven roars above;
But nothing scares them from the course they love.

To the lascivious pipe and wanton song,
That charm down fear, they frolic it along,
With mad rapidity and unconcern,
Down to the gulf, from which is no return.
They trust in navies, and their navies fail—
God's curse can cast away ten thousand sail!
They trust in armies, and their courage dies;
In wisdom, wealth, in fortune, and in lies;
But all they trust in withers, as it must,
When He commands, in whom they place no trust.
Vengeance at last pours down upon their coast
A long despised, but now victorious host;
Tyranny sends the chain that must abridge
The noble sweep of all their privilege;
Gives liberty the last, the mortal shock;
Slips the slave's collar on, and snaps the lock.

A. Such lofty strains embellish what you teach;
Mean you to prophesy, or but to preach?

B. I know the mind, that feels indeed the fire
The muse imparts, and can command the lyre,
Acts with a force, and kindles with a zeal,
Whate'er the theme, that others never feel.
If human woes her soft attention claim,
A tender sympathy pervades the frame;
She pours a sensibility divine
Along the nerve of every feeling line.
But if a deed, not tamely to be borne,
Fire indignation and a sense of scorn,
The strings are swept with a power, so loud,
The storm of music shakes the astonished crowd.
So, when remote futurity is brought
Before the keen inquiry of her thought,
A terrible sagacity informs
The poet's heart; he looks to distant storms;
He hears the thunder ere the tempest lowers;
And, armed with strength surpassing human powers,
Seizes events as yet unknown to man,
And darts his soul into the dawning plan.
Hence, in a Roman mouth, the graceful name
Of prophet and of poet was the same;
Hence British poets too the priesthood shared,
And every hallowed druid was a bard.
But no prophetic fires to me belong;
I play with syllables, and sport in song.

A. At Westminster, where little poets strive
To set a distich upon six and five,
Where discipline helps th' opening buds of sense,
And makes his pupils proud with silver pence,
I was a poet too; but modern taste
Is so refined, and delicate, and chaste,
That verse, whatever fire the fancy warms,
Without a creamy smoothness has no charms.
Thus, all success depending on an ear,
And thinking I might purchase it too dear,
If sentiment were sacrificed to sound,
And truth cut short to make a period round,
I judged a man of sense could scarce do worse
Than caper in the morris-dance of verse.

B. Thus reputation is a spur to wit,
And some wits flag through fear of losing it.
Give me the line that ploughs its stately course
Like a proud swan, conquering the stream by force,
That, like some cottage beauty, strikes the heart,
Quite unindebted to the tricks of art.
When Labour and when Dullness, club in hand,
Like the two figures at St. Dunstan's stand,
Beating alternately, in measured time,
The clock-work tintinabulum of rhyme,
Exact and regular the sounds will be;
But such mere quarter-strokes are not for me.

From him, who rears a poem lank and long,
To him who strains his all into a song;
Perhaps some bonny Caledonian air,
All birks and braes, though he was never there;
Or, having whelped a prologue with great pains;
Feels himself spent, and fumbles for his brains;
A prologue interdashed with many a stroke—
An art contrived to advertise a joke,
So that the jest is clearly to be seen,
Not in the words—but in the gap between:
Manner is all in all, whate'er is writ,
The substitute for genius, sense, and wit.

To dally much with subjects mean and low
Proves that the mind is weak, or makes it so.
Neglected talents rust into decay,
And every effort ends in pushpin play.
The man, that means success, should soar above
A soldier's feather, or a lady's glove;
Else, summoning the muse to such a theme,
The fruit of all her labour is whipped cream.
As if an eagle flew aloft, and then—
Stooped from its highest pitch to pounce a wren.
As if the poet, purposing to wed,
Should carve himself a wife in gingerbread.

Ages elapsed ere Homer's lamp appeared,
And ages ere the Mantuan swan was heard.
To carry nature lengths unknown before,
To give a Milton birth, asked ages more.
Thus Genius rose and set at ordered times,
And shot a dayspring into distant climes,
Ennobling every region that he chose;
He sunk in Greece, in Italy he rose:
And tedious years of Gothic darkness past,
Emerged, all splendour, in our isle at last.
Thus lovely halcyons dive into the main,
Then show far off their shining plumes again.

A. Is genius only found in epic lays?
Prove this, and forfeit all pretence to praise.
Make their heroic powers your own at once,
Or candidly confess yourself a dunce.

B. These were the chief: each interval of night
Was graced with many an undulating light.
In less illustrious bards his beauty shone
A meteor, or a star; in these the sun.

The nightingale may claim the topmost bough,
While the poor grasshopper must chirp below.
Like him unnoticed, I, and such as I,
Spread little wings, and rather skip than fly;
Perched on the meagre produce of the land,
An ell or two of prospect we command;
But never peep beyond the thorny bound
Or oaken fence, that hems the paddock round.

In Eden, ere yet innocence of heart
Had faded, poetry was not an art:
Language, above all teaching, or, if taught,
Only by gratitude and glowing thought,
Elegant as simplicity, and warm
As ecstacy, unmanacled by form;
Not prompted, as in our degenerate days,
By low ambition and the thirst of praise;
Was natural as is the flowing stream,
And yet magnificent. A God the theme!
That theme on earth exhausted, though above
'Tis found as everlasting as his love.
Man lavished all his thoughts on human things
The feats of heroes, and the wrath of kings;
But still, while Virtue kindled his delight,
The song was moral, and so far was right.
'Twas thus, till Luxury seduced the mind
To joys less innocent, as less refined;
Then genius danced a bacchanal; he crowned
The brimming goblet, seized the thyrsus, bound
His brows with ivy, rushed into the field
Of wild imagination, and there reeled,
The victim of his own lascivious fires,
And dizzy with delight, profaned the sacred wires.
Anacreon, Horace played in Greece and Rome
This bedlam part; and others nearer home.
When Cromwell fought for power, and while he reigned
The proud protector of the power he gained,
Religion, harsh, intolerant, austere,
Parent of manners like herself severe,
Drew a rough copy of the Christian face,
Without the smile, the sweetness, or the grace;
The dark and sullen humour of the time
Judged every effort of the muse a crime;
Verse, in the finest mould of fancy cast,
Was lumber in an age so void of taste:
But when the Second Charles assumed the sway,
And arts revived beneath a softer day;
Then, like a bow long forced into a curve,
The mind, released from too constrained a nerve,
Flew to its first position with a spring,
That made the vaulted roofs of pleasure ring.
His court, the dissolute and hateful school
Of Wantonness, where vice was taught by rule,
Swarmed with a scribbling herd, as deep inlaid
With brutal lust as ever Circe made.
From these a long succession, in the rage
Of rank obscenity, debauched their age;
Nor ceased, till, ever anxious to redress
The abuses of her sacred charge, the press,
The muse instructed a well-nurtured train
Of abler votaries to cleanse the stain,

And claim the palm for purity of song,
That Lewdness had usurped and worn so long.
Then decent Pleasantry and sterling Sense,
That neither gave, nor would endure offence,
Whipped out of sight, with satire just and keen,
The puppy pack, that had defiled the scene.

In front of these came Addison. In him
Humour in holiday and sightly trim,
Sublimity and Attic taste combined,
To polish, furnish, and delight the mind.
Then Pope, as harmony itself exact,
In verse well disciplined, complete, compact,
Gave virtue and morality a grace,
That, quite eclipsing Pleasure's painted face,
Levied a tax of wonder and applause,
Even on the fools that trampled on their laws.
But he (his musical finesse was such,
So nice his ear, so delicate his touch)
Made poetry a mere mechanic art;
And every warbler has his tune by heart.
Nature imparting her satiric gift,
Her serious mirth, to Arbuthnot and Swift,
With droll sobriety they raised a smile
At Folly's cost, themselves unmoved the while.
That constellation set, the world in vain
Must hope to look upon their like again.
A. Are we then left—*B.* Not wholly in the dark;
Wit now and then, struck smartly, shows a spark,
Sufficient to redeem the modern race
From total night and absolute disgrace.
While servile trick and imitative knack
Confine the million in the beaten track,
Perhaps some courser, who disdains the road,
Snuffs up the wind, and flings himself abroad.

Contemporaries all surpassed, see one;
Short his career indeed, but ably run;
Churchill, himself unconscious of his powers,
In penury consumed his idle hours;
And, like a scattered seed at random sown,
Was left to spring by vigour of his own.
Lifted at length, by dignity of thought
And dint of genius, to an affluent lot,
He laid his head in Luxury's soft lap,
And took, too often, there his easy nap.
If brighter beams than all he threw not forth,
'Twas negligence in him, not want of worth.
Surly, and slovenly, and bold, and coarse,
Too proud for art, and trusting in mere force,
Spendthrift alike of money and of wit,
Always at speed, and never drawing bit,
He struck the lyre in such a careless mood,
And so disdained the rules he understood,
The laurel seemed to wait on his command,
He snatched it rudely from the Muses' hand.
Nature exerting an unwearied power,
Forms, opens, and gives scent to every flower;
Spreads the fresh verdure of the fields, and leads
The dancing Naiads through the dewy meads:
She fills profuse ten thousand little throats
With music, modulating all their notes;
And charms the woodland scenes, and wilds unknown,
With artless airs and concerts of her own:
But seldom (as if fearful of expense)
Vouchsafes to man a poet's just pretence—
Fervency, freedom, fluency of thought,
Harmony, strength, words exquisitely sought;
Fancy, that, from the bow that spans the sky,
Brings colours, dipped in Heaven, that never die;
A soul exalted above Earth, a mind
Skilled in the characters that form mankind;
And, as the Sun in rising beauty drest,
Looks to the westward from the dappled east,
And marks, whatever clouds may interpose,
Ere yet his race begins, its glorious close;
An eye like his to catch the distant goal;
Or, ere the wheels of verse begin to roll,
Like his to shed illuminating rays
On every scene and subject it surveys:
Thus graced, the man asserts a poet's name,
And the world cheerfully admits the claim.
Pity Religion has so seldom found
A skilful guide into poetic ground!
The flowers would spring where'er she deigned to stray,
And every muse attend her in her way.
Virtue indeed meets many a rhyming friend,
And many a compliment politely penned;
But unattired in that becoming vest
Religion weaves for her, and half undrest,
Stands in the desert, shivering and forlorn,
A wintry figure, like a withered thorn.
The shelves are full, all other themes are sped;
Hackneyed and worn to the last flimsy thread,
Satire has long since done his best; and curst
And loathsome Ribaldry has done his worst;
Fancy has sported all her powers away
In tales, in trifles, and in children's play;
And 'tis the sad complaint, and almost true,
Whate'er we write, we bring forth nothing new.
'Twere new indeed to see a bard all fire,
Touched with a coal from Heaven, assume the lyre,
And tell the world, still kindling as he sung,
With more than mortal music on his tongue,
That He, who died below, and reigns above,
Inspires the song, and that his name is Love.
For, after all, if merely to beguile,
By flowing numbers and a flowery stye,
The tædium that the lazy rich endure,
Which now and then sweet poetry may cure,
Or, if to see the name of idle self,
Stamped on the well-bound quarto, grace the shelf,
To float a bubble on the breath of Fame,
Prompt his endeavour and engage his aim,
Debased to servile purposes of pride,
How are the powers of genius misapplied!

The gift, whose office is the Giver's praise,
To trace him in his word, his works, his ways!
Then spread the rich discovery, and invite
Mankind to share in the divine delight;
Distorted from its use and just design,
To make the pitiful possessor shine,
To purchase, at the fool-frequented fair
Of vanity, a wreath for self to wear,
Is profanation of the basest kind—
Proof of a trifling and a worthless mind,

A. Hail, Sternhold, then! and Hopkins, hail!

B. Amen.

If flattery, folly, lust, employ the pen;
If acrimony, slander, and abuse,
Give it a charge to blacken and traduce;
Though Butler's wit, Pope's numbers, Prior's ease,
With all that fancy can invent to please,
Adorn the polished periods as they fall,
One madrigal of theirs is worth them all.

A. 'Twould thin the ranks of the poetic tribe,
To dash the pen through all that you proscribe.

B. No matter—we could shift when they were not;
And should, no doubt, if they were all forgot.

The Progress of Error.

Si quid loquar audiendum. *Hor.* Lib. iv. Od. 2.

Sing, muse, (if such a theme, so dark, so long,
May find a muse to grace it with a song,)
By what unseen and unsuspected arts
The serpent Error twines round human hearts;
Tell where she lurks, beneath what flowery shades,
That not a glimpse of genuine light pervades,
The poisonous, black, insinuating worm
Successfully conceals her loathsome form.
Take, if ye can, ye careless and supine,
Counsel and caution from a voice like mine!
Truths, that the theorist could never reach,
And observation taught me, I would teach.

Not all, whose eloquence the fancy fills,
Musical as the chime of tinkling rills,
Weak to perform, though mighty to pretend,
Can trace her mazy windings to their end;
Discern the fraud beneath the specious lure,
Prevent the danger, or prescribe the cure.
The clear harangue, and cold as it is clear,
Falls soporific on the listless ear;
Like quicksilver, the rhetoric they display,
Shines as it runs, but grasped at slips away.

Placed for his trial on this bustling stage,
From thoughtless youth to ruminating age,
Free in his will to choose or to refuse,
Man may improve the crisis, or abuse;
Else on the fatalist's unrighteous plan,
Say to what bar amenable were man?
With nought in charge, he could betray no trust;
And, if he fell, would fall because he must;
If Love reward him, or if Vengeance strike,
His recompence in both unjust alike.
Divine authority within his breast
Brings every thought, word, action, to the test;
Warns him or prompts, approves him or restrains,
As Reason, or as Passion, takes the reins.
Heaven from above, and Conscience from within,
Cries in his startled ear—Abstain from sin!
The world around solicits his desire,
And kindles in his soul a treacherous fire,
While, all his purposes and steps to guard,
Peace follows Virtue as its sure reward;
And Pleasure brings as surely in her train
Remorse, and Sorrow, and Vindictive Pain.

Man, thus endued with an elective voice,
Must be supplied with objects of his choice;
Where'er he turns, enjoyment and delight,
Or present, or in prospect, meet his sight;
Those open on the spot their honeyed store
These call him loudly to pursuit of more
His unexhausted mine the sordid vice
Avarice shows, and virtue is the price.
Her various motives his ambition raise—
Power, pomp, and splendour, and the thirst of praise;
There beauty woos him with expanded arms;
E'en Bacchanalian madness has its charms.

Nor these alone, whose pleasures less refined,
Might well alarm the most unguarded mind,
Seek to supplant his inexperienced youth,
Or lead him devious from the path of truth;
Hourly allurements on his passions press,
Safe in themselves, but dangerous in th' excess.
Hark! how it floats upon the dewy air!
O what a dying, dying close was there!
'Tis harmony from yon sequestered bower,
Sweet harmony that soothes the midnight hour!
Long ere the charioteer of day had run
His morning course, th' enchantment was begun,
And he shall gild yon mountain's height again,
Ere yet the pleasing toil becomes a pain.

Is this the rugged path, the steep ascent,
That Virtue points to? Can a life thus spent
Lead to the bliss she promises the wise,
Detach the soul from earth, and speed her to the skies?
Ye devotees to your adored employ,
Enthusiasts, drunk with an unreal joy,
Love makes the music of the blest above,
Heaven's harmony is universal love:

And earthly sounds, tho' sweet and well combined,
And lenient as soft opiates to the mind,
Leave Vice and Folly unsubdued behind.

Gray dawn appears; the sportsman and his train
Speckle the bosom of the distant plain;
'Tis he, the Nimrod of the neighbouring lairs;
Save that his scent is less acute than theirs;
For persevering chase, and headlong leaps,
True beagle as the staunchest hound he keeps.
Charged with the folly of his life's mad scene,
He takes offence, and wonders what you mean;
The joy the danger and the toil o'erpays—
'Tis exercise, and health, and length of days.
Again impetuous to the field he flies;
Leaps every fence but one, there falls and dies;
Like a slain deer, the tumbrel brings him home,
Unmissed but by his dogs and by his groom.

Ye clergy, while your orbit is your place,
Lights of the world, and stars of human race;
But if eccentric ye forsake your sphere,
Prodigies ominous, and viewed with fear;
The comet's baneful influence is a dream;
Yours, real and pernicious in th' extreme.
What then!—are appetites and lusts laid down,
With the same ease that man puts on his gown?
Will Avarice and concupiscence give place,
Charmed by the sounds—Your Reverence, or Your Grace?
No. But his own engagement binds him fast;
Or, if it does not, brands him to the last,
What atheists call him—a designing knave,
A mere church juggler, hypocrite, and slave.
Oh, laugh or mourn with me the rueful jest,
A cassocked huntsman, and a fiddling priest!
He from Italian songsters takes his cue:
Set Paul to music, he shall quote him too.
He takes the field, the master of the pack
Cries—Well done, saint! and claps him on the back.
Is this the path of sanctity? Is this
To stand a waymark in the road to bliss?
Himself a wanderer from the narrow way,
His silly sheep, what wonder if they stray?
Go, cast your orders at your bishop's feet,
Send your dishonoured gown to Monmouth-street!
The sacred function in your hands is made—
Sad privilege! no function, but a trade!

Occiduus is a pastor of renown,
When he has prayed and preached the sabbath down,
With wire and catgut he concludes the day,
Quavering and semiquavering care away
The full concerto swells upon your ear;
All elbows shake. Look in, and you would swear
The Babylonian tyrant with a nod
Had summoned them to serve his golden god.
So well that thought th' employment seems to suit,
Psaltery and sackbut, dulcimer and flute.
O fie! 'tis evangelical and pure:
Observe each face, how sober and demure!
Ecstacy sets her stamp on every mien;
Chins fallen, and not an eye-ball to be seen.
Still I insist, though music heretofore
Has charmed me much, (not e'en Occiduus more,)
Love, joy, and peace, make harmony more meet
For sabbath evenings, and perhaps as sweet.

Will not the sickliest sheep of every flock
Resort to this example as a rock;
There stand, and justify the foul abuse
Of sabbath-hours with plausible excuse?
If apostolic gravity be free
To play the fool on Sundays, why not we?
If he the tinkling harpsichord regards
As inoffensive, what offence in cards?
Strike up the fiddles, let us all be gay,
Laymen have leave to dance, if parsons play.

Oh Italy!—Thy sabbaths will be soon
Our sabbaths, closed with mummery and buffoon.
Preaching and pranks will share the motley scene,
Ours parcelled out, as thine have ever been,
God's worship and the mountebank between.
What says the prophet? Let that day be blest
With holiness and consecrated rest.
Pastime and business both it should exclude,
And bar the door the moment they intrude:
Nobly distinguished above all the six
By deeds, in which the world must never mix.
Hear him again. He calls it a delight,
A day of luxury observed aright,
When the glad soul is made Heaven's welcome guest,
Sits banqueting, and God provides the feast.
But triflers are engaged and can not come;
Their answer to the call is—*Not at home.*

O the dear pleasures of the velvet plain,
The painted tablets, dealt and dealt again!
Cards with what rapture, and the polished die,
The yawning chasm of indolence supply!
Then to the dance, and make the sober moon
Witness of joys that shun the sight of noon.
Blame, cynic, if you can, quadrille or ball,
The snug close party, or the splendid hall,
Where night, down-stooping from her ebon throne,
Views constellations brighter than her own.
'Tis innocent, and harmless, and refined,
The balm of care, Elysium of the mind.
Innocent! Oh, if venerable Time
Slain at the foot of Pleasure be no crime,
Then, with his silver beard and magic wand,
Let Comus rise archbishop of the land;
Let him your rubric and your feasts prescribe,
Grand metropolitan of all the tribe.

Of manners rough, and coarse athletic cast,
The rank debauch suits Clodio's filthy taste.
Rufillus, exquisitely formed by rule,
Not of the moral but the dancing school,

Wonders at Clodio's follies, in a tone
As tragical, as others at his own.
He can not drink five bottles, bilk the score,
Then kill a constable, and drink five more;
But he can draw a pattern, make a tart,
And has the ladies' etiquette by heart.
Go, fool; and, arm in arm with Clodio, plead
Your cause before a bar you little dread;
But know, the law that bids the drunkard die,
Is far too just to pass the trifler by.
Both baby-featured, and of infant size,
Viewed from a distance, and with heedless eyes,
Folly and Innocence are so alike,
The difference, though essential, fails to strike.
Yet Folly ever has a vacant stare,
A simpering countenance, and a trifling air;
But Innocence, sedate, serene, erect,
Delights us, by engaging our respect.
Man, Nature's guest by invitation sweet,
Receives from her both appetite and treat;
But, if he play the glutton and exceed,
His benefactress blushes at the deed;
For Nature, nice, as liberal to dispense,
Made nothing but a brute the slave of sense.
Daniel ate pulse by choice—example rare!
Heaven blessed the youth, and made him fresh and fair.
Gorgonius sits, abdominous and wan,
Like a fat squab upon a Chinese fan:
He snuffs far off th' anticipated joy;
Turtle and ven'son all his thoughts employ;
Prepares for meals as jockeys take a sweat,
Oh, nauseous!—an emetic for a whet!
Will Providence o'erlook the wasted good?
Temperance were no virtue if he could.

That pleasures, therefore, or what such we call,
Are hurtful, is a truth confessed by all;
And some, that seem to threaten virtue less,
Still hurtful in th' abuse, or by th' excess.

Is man then only for his torment placed
The centre of delights he may not taste;
Like fabled Tantalus, condemned to hear
The precious stream still purling in his ear,
Lip-deep in what he longs for, and yet curst
With prohibition, and perpetual thirst?
No, wrangler—destitute of shame and sense
The precept, that enjoins him abstinence,
Forbids him none but the licentious joy,
Whose fruit, though fair, tempts only to destroy.
Remorse, the fatal egg by Pleasure laid
In every bosom where her nest is made,
Hatched by the beams of Truth, denies him rest,
And proves a raging scorpion in his breast.
No pleasure? Are domestic comforts dead?
Are all the nameless sweets of friendship fled;
Has time worn out, or fashion put to shame,
Good sense, good health, good conscience, and good fame?
All these belong to virtue, and all prove,
That virtue has a title to your love.
Have you no touch of pity, that the poor
Stand starved at your inhospitable door?
Or if yourself too scantily supplied
Need help, let honest industry provide.
Earn, if you want; if you abound, impart:
These both are pleasures to the feeling heart.
No pleasure? Has some sickly eastern waste
Sent us a wind to parch us at a blast?
Can British Paradise no scenes afford
To please her sated and indifferent lord?
Are sweet philosophy's enjoyments run
Quite to the lees? And has religion none?
Brutes capable would tell you 'tis a lie,
And judge you from the kennel and the stye.
Delights like these, ye sensual and profane,
Ye are bid, begged, besought to entertain;
Called to these crystal streams, do ye turn off
Obscene to swill and swallow at a trough?
Envy the beast then, on whom Heaven bestows
Your pleasures, with no curses in the close.

Pleasure admitted in undue degree
Enslaves the will, nor leaves the judgment free.
'Tis not alone the grape's enticing juice
Unnerves the moral powers, and mars their use;
Ambition, avarice, and the lust of fame,
And woman, lovely woman, does the same.
The heart, surrendered to the ruling power
Of some ungoverned passion every hour,
Finds by degrees the truths, that once bore sway,
And all their deep impressions, wear away;
So coin grows smooth, in traffic current passed,
Till Cæsar's image is effaced at last.

The breach, tho' small at first, soon opening wide,
In rushes folly with a full-moon tide,
Then welcome errors of whatever size,
To justify it by a thousand lies.
As creeping ivy clings to wood or stone,
And hides the ruin that it feeds upon.
So sophistry cleaves close to and protects
Sin's rotten trunk, concealing its defects.
Mortals, whose pleasures are their only care,
First wish to be imposed on, and then are.
And, lest the fulsome artifice should fail,
Themselves will hide its coarseness with a veil.
Not more industrious are the just and true,
To give to Virtue what is Virtue's due—
The praise of wisdom, comeliness, and worth,
And call her charms to public notice forth—
Than Vice's mean and disingenuous race,
To hide the shocking features of her face.
Her form with dress and lotion they repair;
Then kiss their idol, and pronounce her fair

The sacred implement I now employ
Might prove a mischief, or at best a toy;
A trifle, if it move but to amuse;
But, if to wrong the judgment and abuse,

Worse than a poniard in the basest hand,
It stabs at once the morals of a land.
Ye writers of what none with safety reads,
Footing it in the dance that Fancy leads;
Ye novelists, who mar what ye would mend,
Snivelling and drivelling folly without end;
Whose corresponding misses fill the ream,
With sentimental frippery and dream,
Caught in a delicate soft silken net
By some lewd earl, or rakehell baronet:
Ye pimps, who, under virtue's fair pretence,
Steal to the closet of young innocence,
And teach her, unexperienced yet and green,
To scribble as you scribbled at fifteen;
Who kindling a combustion of desire,
With some cold moral think to quench the fire;
Though all your engineering proves in vain,
The dribbling stream ne'er puts it out again:
O that a verse had power, and could command
Far, far away these flesh-flies of the land;
Who fasten without mercy on the fair,
And suck, and leave a craving maggot there!
Howe'er disguised the inflammatory tale,
And covered with a fine-spun specious veil;
Such writers, and such readers, owe the gust
And relish of their pleasure all to lust.
But the muse, eagle-pinioned, has in view
A quarry more important still than you;
Down, down the wind she swims, and sails away,
Now stoops upon it, and now grasps the prey.
Petronius! all the muses weep for thee;
But every tear shall scald thy memory:
The graces too, while Virtue at their shrine
Lay bleeding under that soft hand of thine,
Felt each a mortal stab in her own breast,
Abhorred the sacrifice, and cursed the priest.
Thou polished and high-finished foe to truth,
Graybeard corrupter of our listening youth,
To purge and skim away the filth of vice,
That so refined it might the more entice,
Then pour it on the morals of thy son;
To taint *his* heart, was worthy of *thine own!*
Now, while the poison all high life pervades,
Write, if thou canst, one letter from the shades;
One, and one only, charged with deep regret,
That thy worse part, thy principles, live yet:
One sad epistle thence may cure mankind
Of the plague spread by bundles left behind.
'Tis granted, and no plainer truth appears,
Our most important are our earliest years;
The mind, impressible and soft, with ease
Imbibes and copies what she hears and sees,
And through life's labyrinth holds fast the clew
That Education gives her, false or true.
Plants raised with tenderness are seldom strong;
Man's coltish disposition asks the thong;
And without discipline, the favourite child,
Like a neglected forester, runs wild.
But we, as if good qualities would grow
Spontaneous, take but little pains to sow;
We give some Latin, and a smatch of Greek,
Teach him to fence and figure twice a week;
And having done, we think, the best we can,
Praise his proficiency, and dub him man.
From school to Cam or Isis, and thence home;
And thence with all convenient speed to Rome,
With reverend tutor clad in habit lay,
To tease for cash, and quarrel with all day;
With memorandum-book for every town,
And every post, and where the chaise broke down,
His stock, a few French phrases got by heart,
With much to learn, but nothing to impart;
The youth obedient to his sire's commands,
Sets off a wanderer into foreign lands.
Surprised at all they meet, the gosling pair,
With awkward gait, stretched neck, and silly stare,
Discover huge cathedrals built with stone,
And steeples towering high much like our own;
But show peculiar light by many a grin,
At popish practices observed within.
Ere long, some bowing, smirking, smart abbé
Remarks two loiterers that have lost their way;
And being always primed with *politesse*
For men of their appearance and address,
With much compassion undertakes the task,
To tell them more than they have wit to ask;
Points to inscriptions wheresoe'er they tread,
Such as, when legible, were never read,
But, being cankered now and half worn out,
Craze antiquarian brains with endless doubt;
Some headless hero, or some Cæsar shows—
Defective only in his Roman nose;
Exhibits elevations, drawings, plans,
Models of Herculanean pots and pans;
And sells them medals, which, if neither rare
Nor ancient, will be so, preserved with care.
Strange the recital! from whatever cause
His great improvement and new light he draws,
The squire, once bashful, is shamefaced no more,
But teems with powers he never felt before:
Whether increased momentum, and the force,
With which from clime to clime he sped his course,
(As axles sometimes kindle as they go)
Chafed him, and brought dull nature to a glow
Or whether clearer skies and softer air,
That make Italian flowers so sweet and fair,
Freshening his lazy spirits as he ran,
Unfolded genially and spread the man;
Returning he proclaims by many a grace,
By shrugs and strange contortions of his face,
How much a dunce, that has been sent to roam,
Excels a dunce, that has been kept at home.
Accomplishments have taken virtue's place,
And wisdom falls before exterior grace:
We slight the precious kernel of the stone,
And toil to polish its rough coat alone

A just deportment, manners graced with ease,
Elegant phrase, and figure formed to please,
Are qualities, that seem to comprehend
Whatever parents, guardians, schools intend;
Hence an unfurnished and a listless mind,
Though busy, trifling; empty, though refined;
Hence all that interferes, and dares to clash
With indolence and luxury, is trash:
While learning, once the man's exclusive pride,
Seems verging fast towards the female side.
Learning itself, received into a mind
By nature weak, or viciously inclined,
Serves but to lead philosophers astray,
Where children would with ease discern the way,
And of all arts sagacious dupes invent,
To cheat themselves and gain the world's assent,
The worst is—Scripture warped from its intent.

The carriage bowls along, and all are pleased
If Tom be sober, and the wheels well greased;
But if the rogue have gone a cup too far,
Left out his linchpin, or forgot his tar,
It suffers interruption and delay,
And meets with hindrance in the smoothest way.
When some hypothesis, absurd and vain,
Has filled with all its fumes a critic's brain,
The text, that sorts not with his darling whim,
Though plain to others, is obscure to him.
The will made subject to a lawless force,
All is irregular and out of course;
And Judgment drunk, and bribed to lose his way,
Winks hard, and talks of darkness at noonday.

A critic on the sacred book should be
Candid and learned, dispassionate and free:
Free from the wayward bias bigots feel,
From fancy's influence, and intemperate zeal:
But, above all, (or let the wretch refrain,
Nor touch the page he can not but profane,)
Free from the domineering power of lust;
A lewd interpreter is never just.

How shall I speak thee, or thy power address,
Thou god of our idolatry, the Press?
By thee religion, liberty, and laws,
Exert their influence, and advance their cause;
By thee worse plagues than Pharaoh's land befel,
Diffuse, make Earth the vestibule of Hell:
Thou fountain, at which drink the good and wise;
Thou ever-bubbling spring of endless lies;
Like Eden's dread probationary tree,
Knowledge of good and evil is from thee.

No wild enthusiast ever yet could rest,
Till half mankind were like himself possessed.
Philosophers, who darken and put out
Eternal truth by everlasting doubt;
Church quacks, with passions under no command,
Who fill the world with doctrines contraband,
Discoverers of they know not what, confined
Within no bounds—the blind that lead the blind;
To streams of popular opinion drawn,
Deposit in those shallows all their spawn.
The wriggling fry soon fill the creeks around,
Poisoning the waters where their swarms abound.
Scorned by the nobler tenants of the flood,
Minnows and gudgeons gorge th' unwholsome food.
The propagated myriads spread so fast,
E'en Lewenhoeck himself would stand aghast,
Employed to calculate th' enormous sum,
And own his crab-computing powers o'ercome.
Is this hyperbole? The world well known,
Your sober thoughts will hardly find it one.

Fresh confidence the speculatist takes
From every hair-brained proselyte he makes;
And therefore prints. Himself but half deceived,
Till others have the soothing tale believed.
Hence comment after comment, spun as fine
As bloated spiders draw the flimsy line:
Hence the same word, that bids our lusts obey,
Is misapplied to sanctify their sway.
If stubborn Greek refuse to be his friend,
Hebrew or Syriac shall be forced to bend:
If languages and copies all cry, No—
Somebody proved it centuries ago.
Like trout pursued, the critic in despair
Darts to the mud, and finds his safety there.
Women, whom custom has forbid to fly,
The scholar's pitch (the scholar best knows why,)
With all the simple and unlettered poor,
Admire his learning, and almost adore.
Whoever errs, the priest can ne'er be wrong,
With such fine words familiar to his tongue.
Ye ladies! (for indifferent in your cause,
I should deserve to forfeit all applause,)
Whatever shocks or gives the least offence
To virtue, delicacy, truth, or sense,
Try the criterion, 'tis a faithful guide,)
Nor has, nor can have, Scripture on its side.

None but an author knows an author's cares,
Or Fancy's fondness for the child she bears.
Committed once into the public arms,
The baby seems to smile with added charms.
Like something precious ventured far from shore,
'Tis valued for the danger's sake the more.
He views it with complacency supreme,
Solicits kind attention to his dream;
And daily more enamoured of the cheat,
Kneels, and asks heaven to bless the dear deceit.
So one, whose story serves at least to show
Men loved their own productions long ago,
Wooed an unfeeling statue for his wife,
Nor rested till the gods had given it life.
If some mere driveller suck the sugared fib,
One that still needs his leading-string and bit,
And praise his genius, he is soon repaid
In praise applied to the same part—his head:
For 'tis a rule that holds for ever true,
Grant me discernment, and I grant it you.

Patient of contradiction as a child,
Affable, humble, diffident, and mild;

Such was Sir Isaac, and such Boyle and Locke:
Your blunderer is as sturdy as a rock.
The creature is so sure to kick and bite,
A muleteer's the man to set him right.
First Appetite enlists him Truth's sworn foe,
Then obstinate Self-will confirms him so.
Tell him he wanders; that his error leads
To fatal ills; that, though the path he treads
Be flowery, and he sees no cause of fear,
Death and the pains of hell attend him there:
In vain; the slave of arrogance and pride:
He has no hearing on the prudent side.
His still refuted quirks he still repeats;
New raised objections with new quibbles meets;
Till sinking in the quicksand he defends,
He dies disputing, and the contest ends—
But not the mischiefs; they, still left behind,
Like thistle-seeds, are sown by every wind.

Thus men go wrong with an ingenious skill;
Bend the straight rule to their own crooked will;
And with a clear and shining lamp supplied,
First put it out, then take it for a guide.
Halting on crutches of unequal size,
One leg by truth supported, one by lies;
They sidle to the goal with awkward pace,
Secure of nothing—but to loose the race.
Faults in the life breed errors in the brain,
And these reciprocally those again.
The mind and conduct mutually imprint
And stamp their image in each other's mint:
Each, sire and dam, of an infernal race,
Begetting and conceiving all that's base.
None sends his arrow to the mark in view,
Whose hand is feeble, or his aim untrue.
For though ere yet, the shaft is on the wing,
Or when it first forsakes th' elastic string,
It err but little from the intended line,
It falls at last far wide of his design:
So he who seeks a mansion in the sky,
Must watch his purpose with a steadfast eye;
That prize belongs to none but the sincere;
The least obliquity is fatal here.

With cautious taste the sweet Circean cup:
He that sips often, at last drinks it up.
Habits are soon assumed; but when we strive
To strip them off, 'tis being flayed alive.
Called to the temple of impure delight,
He that abstains, and he alone, does right.
If a wish wander that way, call it home;
He cannot long be safe whose wishes roam.
But, if you pass the threshold you are caught;
Die then, if power Almighty save you not.
There hardening by degrees, till double steeled,
Take leave of nature's God, and God revealed;
Then laugh at all you trembled at before;
And, joining the free-thinker's brutal roar,
Swallow the two grand nostrums they dispense—
That Scripture lies, and blasphemy is sense:
If clemency revolted by abuse
Be damnable, then damned without excuse.

Some dream that they can silence, when they will,
The storm of passion, and say, *Peace, be still;*
But "*Thus far and no further*," when addressed
To the wild wave, or wilder human breast,
Implies authority that never can,
That never ought to be the lot of man.

But, muse forbear; long flights forbode a fall;
Strike on the deep-toned chord the sum of all.

Hear the just law—the judgment of the skies:
He that hates truth shall be the dupe of lies:
And he that *will* be cheated to the last,
Delusions strong as Hell shall bind him fast.
But if the wanderer his mistake discern,
Judge his own ways, and sigh for a return,
Bewildered once, must he bewail his loss
For ever and for ever? No—the cross!
There and there only (though the deist rave,
And atheist, if earth bear so base a slave;)
There and there only is the power to save.
There no delusive hope invites despair;
No mockery meets you, no deception there.
The spells and charms, that blinded you before,
All vanish there, and fascinate no more.

I am no preacher, let this hint suffice—
The cross once seen is death to every vice:
Else he that hung there suffered all his pain,
Bled, groaned, and agonized, and died, in vain.

Truth.

Pensantur trutina.—*Hor.* Lib. ii. Epist. 1.

MAN, on the dubious waves of error tossed,
His ship half-foundered, and his compass lost,
Sees, far as human optics may command,
A sleeping fog, and fancies it dry land:
Spreads all his canvass, every sinew plies;
Pants for 't, aims at it, enters it, and dies!
Then farewell all self-satisfying schemes,
His well-built systems, philosophic dreams;
Deceitful views of future bliss farewell!—
He reads his sentence at the flames of Hell.

Hard lot of man—to toil for the reward
Of virtue, and yet lose it! Wherefore hard?
He that would win the race must guide his horse
Obedient to the customs of the course;
Else, though unequalled to the goal he flies,
A meaner than himself shall gain the prize.

Grace leads the right way; if you choose the wrong,
Take it and perish; but restrain your tongue;
Charge not, with light sufficient, and left free,
Your wilful suicide on God's decree.
O how unlike the complex works of man,
Heaven's easy, artless, unincumbered plan!
No meretricious graces to beguile,
No clustering ornaments to clog the pile;
From ostentation as from weakness free,
It stands like the cerulean arch we see,
Majestic in its own simplicity.
Inscribed above the portal, from afar
Conspicuous as the brightness of a star,
Legible only by the light they give,
Stand the soul-quick'ning words—*Believe and live.*
Too many, shocked at what should charm them most,
Despire the plain direction, and are lost.
Heaven on such terms! (they cry with proud disdain,)
Incredible, impossible, and vain!—
Rebel, because 'tis easy to obey;
And scorn, for its own sake, the gracious way.
These are the sober, in whose cooler brains
Some thought of immortality remains;
The rest, too busy or too gay to wait
On the sad theme, their everlasting state,
Sport for a day, and perish in a night,
The foam upon the waters not so light.
Who judged the pharisee? What odious cause
Exposed him to the vengeance of the laws?
Had he seduced a virgin, wronged a friend,
Or stabbed a man to serve some private end?
Was blasphemy his sin? Or did he stray
From the strict duties of the sacred day?
Sit long and late at the carousing board?
(Such were the sins with which he charged his Lord.)
No—the man's morals were exact, what then?
'Twas his ambition to be seen of men;
His virtues were his pride; and that one vice
Made all his virtues gewgaws of no price;
He wore them as fine trappings for a show,
A praying, synagogue-frequenting beau.
The self-applauding bird, the peacock see—
Mark what a sumptuous pharisee is he!
Meridian sun-beams tempt him to unfold
His radiant glories, azure, green, and gold:
He treads as if, some solemn music near,
His measured step were governed by his ear:
And seems to say—Ye meaner fowl, give place,
I am all splendour, dignity, and grace!
Not so the pheasant on his charms presumes,
Though he too has a glory in his plumes.
He, Christian like, retreats with modest mien
To the close copse, or far-sequestered green,
And shines without desiring to be seen.
The plea of works, as arrogant and vain,
Heaven turns from with abhorrence and disdain;
Not more affronted by avowed neglect,
Than by the mere dissembler's feigned respect.
What is all righteousness that men devise?
What—but a sordid bargain for the skies?
But Christ as soon would abdicate his own,
As stoop from Heaven to sell the proud a throne.

His dwelling a recess in some rude rock,
Book, beads, and maple dish, his meagre stock;
In shirt of hair, and weeds of canvass, dressed,
Girt with a bell-rope that the pope has blessed;
Adust with stripes told out for every crime,
And sore tormented long before his time;
His prayer preferred to saints that can not aid;
His praise postponed, and never to be paid;
See the sage hermit, by mankind admired,
With all that bigotry adopts inspired,
Wearing out life in his religious whim,
Till his religious whimsy wears out him.
His works, his abstinence, his zeal allowed,
You think him humble—God accounts him proud,
High in demand, though lowly in pretence,
Of all his conduct this the genuine sense—
My penitential stripes, my streaming blood,
Have purchased Heaven and prove my title good.
Turn Eastward now, and Fancy shall apply
To your weak sight her telescopic eye.
The bramin kindles on his own bare head
The sacred fire, self-torturing his trade;
His voluntary pains, severe and long,
Would give a barbarous air to British song;
No grand inquisitor could worse invent,
Than he contrives to suffer, well content.
Which is the saintlier worthy of the two?
Past all dispute, yon anchorite say you.
Your sentence and mine differ. What's a name?
I say the bramin has the fairer claim.
If sufferings, Scripture no where recommends,
Devised by self to answer selfish ends,
Give saintship, then all Europe must agree
Ten starveling hermits suffer less than he.
The truth is (if the truth may suit your ear,
And prejudice have left a passage clear,)
Pride has attained its most luxuriant growth,
And poisoned every virtue in them both.
Pride may be pampered while the flesh grows lean;
Humility may clothe an English dean;
That grace was Cowper's—his, confessed by all—
Though placed in golden Durham's second stall.
Not all the plenty of a bishop's board,
His palace, and his lackeys, and "My Lord,"
More nourish pride, that condescending vice,
Than abstinence, and beggary, and lice;
It thrives in misery, and abundant grows:
In misery fools upon themselves impose.
But why before us protestants produce
An Indian mystic, or a French recluse?
Their sin is plain; but what have we to fear,
Reformed and well instructed? You shall hear.

Yon ancient prude, whose withered features show
She might be young some forty years ago,
Her elbows pinioned close upon her hips,
Her head erect, her fan upon her lips,
Her eye-brows arched, her eyes both gone astray
To watch yon amorous couple in their play,
With bony and unkerchiefed neck defies
The rude inclemency of wintry skies,
And sails with lappet-head and mincing airs
Duly at clink of bell to morning prayers.
To thrift and parsimony much inclined,
She yet allows herself that boy behind;
The shivering urchin, bending as he goes,
With slipshod heels, and dewdrop at his nose;
His predecessor's coat advanced to wear,
Which future pages yet are doomed to share,
Carries her Bible tucked beneath his arm,
And hides his hands to keep his fingers warm.

She, half an angel in her own account,
Doubts not hereafter with the saints to mount,
Though not a grace appears on strictest search,
But that she fasts, and *item*, goes to church.
Conscious of age, she recollects her youth,
And tells, not always with an eye to truth,
Who spanned her waist, and who, where'er he came,
Scrawled upon glass Miss Bridget's lovely name;
Who stole her slipper, filled it with tokay,
And drank the little bumper every day.
Of temper as envenomed as an asp,
Censorious, and her every word a wasp;
In faithful memory she records the crimes,
Or real or fictitious, of the times;
Laughs at the reputations she has torn,
And holds them dangling at arm's length in scorn.
Such are the fruits of sanctimonious pride,
Of malice fed while flesh is mortified:
Take, Madam, the reward of all your prayers,
Where hermits and where bramins meet with theirs;
Your portion is with them.—Nay, never frown,
But, if you please, some fathoms lower down.

Artist attend—your brushes and your paint—
Produce them—take a chair—now draw a saint.
Oh sorrowful and sad! the streaming tears
Channel her cheeks—a Niobe appears!
Is this a saint? Throw tints and all away—
True piety is cheerful as the day,
Will weep indeed and heave a pitying groan
For others' woes, but smiles upon her own.

What purpose has the King of saints in view?
Why falls the Gospel like a gracious dew?
To call up plenty from the teeming earth,
Or curse the desert with a tenfold dearth?
Is it that Adam's offspring may be saved
From servile fear, or be the more enslaved?
To loose the links that galled mankind before,
Or bind them faster on, and add still more?
The freeborn Christian has no chains to prove,
Or, if a chain, the golden one of love;
No fear attends to quench his glowing fires,
What fear he feels, his gratitude inspires.
Shall he, for such deliverance freely wrought,
Recompense ill? He trembles at the thought.
His Master's interest and his own combined,
Prompt every movement of his heart and mind:
Thought, word, and deed his liberty evince,
His freedom is the freedom of a prince.
Man's obligations infinite, of course
His life should prove that he perceives their force;
His utmost he can render is but small—
The principle and motive all in all.
You have two servants—Tom, an arch, sly rogue,
From top to toe the Geta now in vogue,
Genteel in figure, easy in address,
Moves without noise, and swift as an express,
Reports a message with a pleasing grace,
Expert in all the duties of his place;
Say, on what hinge does his obedience move?
Has he a world of gratitude and love?
No, not a spark—'tis all mere sharper's play;
He likes your house, your housemaid and your pay;
Reduce his wages or get rid of her,
Tom quits you, with—Your most obedient, Sir.
The dinner served, Charles takes his usual stand,
Watches your eye, anticipates command;
Sighs if perhaps your appetite should fail;
And, if he but suspects a frown, turns pale;
Consults all day your interest and your ease,
Richly rewarded if he can but please;
And, proud to make his firm attachment known,
To save your life would nobly risk his own.
Now which stands highest in your serious thought?
Charles, without doubt, say you—and so he ought;
One act, that from a thankful heart proceeds,
Excels ten thousand mercenary deeds.
Thus Heaven approves, as honest and sincere,
The work of generous love and filial fear;
But with averted eyes th' omniscient Judge
Scorns the base hireling, and the slavish drudge.
Where dwell these matchless saints?—old Curio cries.
E'en at your side, Sir, and before your eyes,
The favoured few—th' enthusiasts you despise.
And pleased at heart, because on holy ground
Sometimes a canting hypocrite is found,
Reproach a people with his single fall,
And cast his filthy garment at them all.
Attend!—an apt similitude shall show,
Whence springs the conduct that offends you so.
See where it smokes along the sounding plain,
Blown all aslant, a driving, dashing rain,
Peal upon peal redoubling all around,
Shakes it again and faster to the ground;
Now flashing wide, now glancing as in play,
Swift beyond thought the lightnings dart away,

Ere yet it came the traveller urged his steed,
And hurried, but with unsuccessful speed;
Now drenched throughout, and hopeless of his case,
He drops the rein, and leaves him to his pace.
Suppose, unlooked-for in a scene so rude,
Long hid by interposing hill or wood,
Some mansion, neat and elegantly dressed,
By some kind hospitable heart possessed,
Offer him warmth, security, and rest;
Think with what pleasure, safe and at his ease,
He hears the tempest howling in the trees;
What glowing thanks his lips and heart employ,
While danger past is turned to present joy.
So fares it with the sinner, when he feels
A growing dread of vengeance at his heels:
His conscience, like a glassy lake before,
Lashed into foaming waves, begins to roar;
The law grown clamorous, though silent long,
Arraigns him—charges him with every wrong—
Asserts the rights of his offended Lord,
And death or restitution is the word:
The last impossible, he fears the first,
And, having well deserved, expects the worst,
Then welcome refuge, and a peaceful home;
Oh for a shelter from the wrath to come!
Crush me, ye rocks! ye falling mountains hide,
Or bury me in ocean's angry tide.
The scrutiny of those all seeing eyes
I dare not—And you need not, God replies;
The remedy you want I freely give:
The Book shall teach you—read, believe, and live!
'Tis done—the raging storm is heard no more,
Mercy receives him on her peaceful shore:
And Justice, guardian of the dread command,
Drops the red vengeance from his willing hand.
A soul redeemed demands a life of praise;
Hence the complexion of his future days,
Hence a demeanour holy and unspecked,
And the world's hatred, as its sure effect.
Some lead a life unblameable and just,
Their own dear virtue their unshaken trust;
They never sin—or if (as all offend)
Some trivial slips their daily walk attend,
The poor are near at hand, the charge is small,
A slight gratuity atones for all.
For though the pope has lost his interest here,
And pardons are not sold as once they were,
No papist more desirous to compound,
Than some grave sinners upon English ground.
That plea refuted, other quirks they seek—
Mercy is infinite, and man is weak;
The future shall obliterate the past,
And Heaven no doubt shall be their home at last.
Come then—a still, small whisper in your ear—
He has no hope who never had a fear;
And he that never doubted of his state,
He may perhaps—perhaps he may—too late.
The path to bliss abounds with many a snare;
Learning is one, and wit, however rare.
The Frenchman, first in literary fame,
(Mention him if you please.) Voltaire?—The same.
With spirit, genius, eloquence, supplied,
Lived long, wrote much, laughed heartily, and died.
The Scripture was his jest-book, whence he drew
Bon mots to gall the Christian and the Jew;
An infidel in health, but what when sick?
Oh—then a text would touch him at the quick:
View him at Paris in his last career,
Surrounding throngs the demi-god revere;
Exalted on his pedestal of pride,
And fumed frankincense on every side,
He begs their flattery with his latest breath,
And smothered in 't at last, is praised to death.
Yon cottager, who weaves at her own door,
Pillow and bobbins all her little store;
Content though mean, and cheerful if not gay,
Shuffling her threads about the livelong day,
Just earns a scanty pittance, and at night,
Lies down secure, her heart and pocket light;
She, for her humble sphere by nature fit,
(Has little understanding, and no wit,
Receives no praise; but, though her lot be such,
Toilsome and indigent) she renders much;
Just knows, and knows no more, her Bible true—
A truth the brilliant Frenchman never knew;
And in that charter reads with sparkling eyes
Her title to a treasure in the skies.
Oh happy peasant! Oh unhappy bard!
His the mere tinsel, hers the rich reward;
He praised perhaps for ages yet to come,
She never heard of half a mile from home:
He lost in errors his vain heart prefers,
She safe in the simplicity of hers.
Not many wise, rich, noble, or profound
In science, win one inch of heavenly ground.
And is it not a mortifying thought
The poor should gain it, and the rich should not?
No—the voluptuaries, who ne'er forget
One pleasure lost, lose Heaven without regret;
Regret would rouse them, and give birth to prayer;
Prayer would add faith, and faith would fix them there.
Not that the Former of us all, in this,
Or aught he does, is governed by caprice;
The supposition is replete with sin,
And bears the brand of blasphemy burnt in.
Not so—the silver trumpet's heavenly call
Sounds for the poor, but sounds alike for all:
Kings are invited, and would kings obey,
No slaves on earth more welcome were than they:
But royalty, nobility, and state,
Are such a dead preponderating weight,
That endless bliss (how strange soe'er it seem)
In counterpoise, flies up and kicks the beam.
'Tis open, and ye can not enter—why?
Because ye will not, Conyers would reply—
And he says much that many may dispute,
And cavil at with ease, but none refute.

O blessed effect of penury and want;
The seed sown there how vigorous is the plant!
No soil like poverty for growth divine,
As leanest land supplies the richest wine.
Earth gives too little, giving only bread,
To nourish pride, or turn the weakest head:
To them the sounding jargon of the schools
Seems what it is—a cap and bells for fools:
The light they walked by, kindled from above,
Shows them the shortest way to life and love:
They, strangers to the controversial field,
Where deists, always foiled, yet scorn to yield,
And never checked by what impedes the wise,
Believe, rush forward, and possess the prize.

Envy, ye great, the dull unlettered small:
Ye have much cause for envy—but not all.
We boast some rich ones whom the Gospel sways,
And one who wears a coronet and prays;
Like gleanings of an olive-tree they show,
Here and there one upon the topmost bough.

How readily upon the Gospel plan,
That question has its answer—What is man?
Sinful and weak, in every sense a wretch;
An instrument, whose chords upon the stretch,
And strained to the last screw that he can bear,
Yield only discord in his Maker's ear:
Once the blest residence of truth divine,
Glorious as Solyma's interior shrine,
Where, in his own oracular abode,
Dwelt visibly the light-creating God;
But made long since, like Babylon of old,
A den of mischiefs never to be told:
And she, once mistress of the realms around,
Now scattered wide, and no where to be found,
As soon shall rise and reascend the throne,
By native power and energy her own,
As Nature, at her own peculiar cost,
Restore to man the glories he has lost.
Go—bid the winter cease to chill the year,
Replace the wand'ring comet in his sphere,
Then boast (but wait for that unhoped-for hour)
The self-restoring arm of human power;
But what is man in his own proud esteem?
Hear him—himself the poet and the theme:
A monarch clothed with majesty and awe,
His mind his kingdom, and his will his law,
Grace in his mien, and glory in his eyes,
Supreme on earth, and worthy of the skies,
Strength in his heart, dominion in his nod,
And, thunderbolts excepted, quite a God!
So sings he, charmed with his own mind and form,
The song magnificent—the theme a worm!
Himself so much the source of his delight,
His Maker has no beauty in his sight.
See where he sits, contemplative and fixed,
Pleasure and wonder in his features mixed,
His passions tamed and all at his control
How perfect the composure of his soul!

Complacency has breathed a gentle gale
O'er all his thoughts, and swelled his easy sail:
His books well trimmed and in the gayest style,
Like regimental coxcombs, rank and file,
Adorn his intellects as well as shelves,
And teach him notions splendid as themselves:
The Bible only stands neglected there,
Though that of all most worthy of his care;
And, like an infant troublesome awake,
Is left to sleep for peace and quiet's sake.

What shall the man deserve of human kind,
Whose happy skill and industry combined
Shall prove (what argument could never yet)
The Bible an imposture and a cheat?
The praises of the libertine professed,
The worst of men, and curses of the best.
Where should the living, weeping o'er his woes;
The dying, trembling at the awful close;
Where the betrayed, forsaken, and oppressed,
The thousands whom the world forbids to rest;
Where should they find (those comforts at an end
The Scripture yields,) or hope to find, a friend?
Sorrow might muse herself to madness then,
And, seeking exile from the sight of men,
Bury herself in solitude profound,
Grow frantic with her pangs, and bite the ground.
Thus often Unbelief, grown sick of life,
Flies to the tempting pool, or felon knife.
The jury meet, the coroner is short,
And lunacy the verdict of the court:
Reverse the sentence, let the truth be known,
Such lunacy is ignorance alone;
They knew not, what some bishops may not know,
That Scripture is the only cure of wo;
That field of promise, how it flings abroad
Its odour o'er the Christian's thorny road!
The soul, reposing on assured relief,
Feels herself happy amidst all her grief,
Forgets her labour as she toils along,
Weeps tears of joy, and bursts into a song.

But the same word, that, like the polished share,
Ploughs up the roots of a believer's care,
Kills too the flow'ry weeds, where'er they grow,
That bind the sinner's Bacchanalian brow.
Oh that unwelcome voice of heavenly love,
Sad messenger of mercy from above!
How does it grate upon his thankless ear,
Crippling his pleasures with the cramp of fear!
His will and judgment at continual strife,
That civil war imbitters all his life:
In vain he points his powers against the skies,
In vain he closes or averts his eyes,
Truth will intrude—she bids him yet beware;
And shakes the sceptic in the scorner's chair.
Though various foes against the truth combine,
Pride above all opposes her design;
Pride, of a growth superior to the rest,
The subtlest serpent with the loftiest crest.

Swells at the thought, and, kindling into rage,
Would hiss the cherub Mercy from the stage.
And is the soul indeed so lost?—she cries,
Fallen from her glory, and too weak to rise?
Torpid and dull beneath a frozen zone,
Has she no spark that may be deemed her own?
Grant her indebted to what zealots call
Grace undeserved, yet surely not for all—
Some beams of rectitude she yet displays,
Some love of virtue, and some power to praise;
Can lift herself above corporeal things,
And, soaring on her own unborrowed wings,
Possess herself of all that's good or true,
Assert the skies, and vindicate her due.
Past indiscretion is a venial crime,
And if the youth, unmellowed yet by time,
Bore on his branch, luxuriant then and rude,
Fruits of a blighted size, austere and crude,
Maturer years shall happier stores produce,
And meliorate the well-concocted juice.
Then conscious of her meritorious zeal,
To justice she may make her bold appeal,
And leave to mercy, with a tranquil mind,
The worthless and unfruitful of mankind.
Hear then how mercy, slighted and defied,
Retorts the affront against the crown of Pride.

Perish the virtue, as it ought, abhorred,
And the fool with it, who insults his Lord.
The atonement, a Redeemer's love has wrought,
Is not for you—the righteous need it not.
Seest thou yon harlot, wooing all she meets,
The worn-out nuisance of the public streets,
Herself from morn to night, from night to morn,
Her own abhorrence, and as much your scorn;
The gracious shower, unlimited and free,
Shall fall on her, when heaven denies it thee.
Of all that wisdom dictates, this the drift,
That man is dead in sin, and life a gift.

Is virtue, then, unless of Christian growth,
Mere fallacy, or foolishness, or both?
Ten thousand sages lost in endless wo,
For ignorance of what they could not know?
That speech betrays at once a bigot's tongue,
Charge not a God with such outrageous wrong.
'Truly not I—the partial light men have,
My creed persuades me, well-employed, may save:
While he that scorns the noonday beam, perverse,
Shall find the blessing unimproved a curse.
Let heathen worthies, whose exalted mind
Left sensuality and dross behind,
Possess for me their undisputed lot,
And take unenvied the reward they sought:
But still in virtue of a Saviour's plea,
Not blind by choice, but destined not to see.
Their fortitude and wisdom were a flame
Celestial, though they knew not whence it came,
Derived from the same source of light and grace,
That guides the Christian in his swifter race;
Their judge was conscience, and her rule their law
That rule, pursued with reverence and with awe,
Led them, however faltering, faint, and slow,
From what they knew, to what they wished to know.
But let not him, that shares a brighter day,
Traduce the splendour of a noontide ray,
Prefer the twilight of a darker time,
And deem his base stupidity no crime:
The wretch, who slights the bounties of the skies,
And sinks, while favoured with the means to rise,
Shall find them rated at their full amount;
The good he scorned all carried to account.

Marshaling all his terrors as he came,
Thunder, and earthquake, and devouring flame,
From Sinai's top Jehovah gave the law,
Life for obedience, death for every flaw.
When the great Sovereign would his will express,
He gives a perfect rule; what can he less?
And guards it with a sanction as severe
As vengeance can inflict, or sinners fear:
Else his own glorious rights he would disclaim,
And man might safely trifle with his name.
He bids him glow with unremitting love
To all on earth, and to himself above;
Condemns the injurious deed, the slanderous tongue,
The thought that meditates a brother's wrong:
Brings not alone the more conspicuous part,
His conduct, to the test, but tries his heart.

Hark! universal nature shook and groaned,
'Twas the last trumpet—see the judge enthroned;
Rouse all your courage at your utmost need,
Now summon every virtue, stand and plead.
What! silent? Is your boasting heard no more?
That self-renouncing wisdom, learned before,
Had shed immortal glories on your brow,
That all your virtues can not purchase now.

All joy to the believer! He can speak—
Trembling yet happy, confident yet meek.

Since the dear hour, that brought me to thy foot
And cut up all my follies by the root,
I never trusted in an arm but thine,
Nor hoped, but in thy righteousness divine:
My prayers and alms, imperfect and defiled,
Were but the feeble efforts of a child;
Howe'er performed, it was their brightest part,
That they proceeded from a grateful heart:
Cleansed in thine own all purifying blood,
Forgive their evil, and accept their good;
I cast them at thy feet—my only plea
Is what it was, dependence upon thee;
While struggling in the vale of tears below,
That never failed, nor shall it fail me now.

Angelic gratulations rend the skies,
Pride falls unpitied, never more to rise,
Humility is crowned, and Faith receives the prize

Expostulation.

Tantane tam patiens, nullo certamine tolli
Dona sines? *Virg.* Æn. Lib. V.

Why weeps the muse for England? What appears
In England's case, to move the muse to tears?
From side to side of her delightful isle
Is she not clothed with a perpetual smile?
Can nature add a charm, or art confer
A new-found luxury not seen in her?
Where under heaven is pleasure more pursued,
Or where does cold reflection less intrude?
Her fields a rich expanse of wavy corn,
Poured out from plenty's overflowing horn;
Ambrosial gardens, in which art supplies
The fervour and the force of Indian skies;
Her peaceful shores, where busy commerce waits
To pour his golden tide through all her gates;
Whom fiery suns, that scorch the russet spice
Of eastern groves, and oceans floored with ice,
Forbid in vain to push his daring way
To darker climes, or climes of brighter day;
Whom the winds waft where'er the billows roll,
From the world's girdle to the frozen pole;
The chariots bounding in her wheel-worn streets,
Her vaults below, where every vintage meets;
Her theatres, her revels, and her sports;
The scenes to which not youth alone resorts,
But age, in spite of weakness and of pain,
Still haunts, in hope to dream of youth again;
All speak her happy: let the Muse look round
From East to West, no sorrow can be found;
Or only what, in cottages confined,
Sighs unregarded to the passing wind.
Then wherefore weep for England? What appears
In England's case to move the muse to tears?

The prophet wept for Israel; wished his eyes
Were fountains fed with infinite supplies;
For Israel dealt in robbery and wrong;
There were the scorner's and the slanderer's tongue.
Oaths, used as playthings or convenient tools,
As interest bias'd knaves, or fashion fools;
Adultery, neighing at his neighbour's door;
Oppression, lab'ring hard to grind the poor;
The partial balance, and deceitful weight;
The treacherous smile, a mask for secret hate;
Hypocrisy, formality in prayer,
And the dull service of the lip were there.
Her women, insolent and self-caressed,
By Vanity's unwearied finger dressed,
Forgot the blush, that virgin fears impart
To modest cheeks, and borrowed one from art;
Were just such trifles, without worth or use,
As silly pride and idleness produce;
Curled, scented, furbelowed, and flounced around,
With feet too delicate to touch the ground,
They stretched the neck, and rolled the wanton eye,
And sighed for every fool that fluttered by.
He saw his people slaves to every lust,
Lewd, avaricious, arrogant, unjust;
He heard the wheels of an avenging God
Groan heavily along the distant road;
Saw Babylon set wide her two-leaved brass
To let the military deluge pass;
Jerusalem a prey, her glory soiled,
Her princes captive, and her treasures spoiled;
Wept till all Israel heard his bitter cry,
Stamped with his foot, and smote upon his thigh:
But wept, and stamped, and smote his thigh in vain;
Pleasure is deaf when told of future pain,
And sounds prophetic are too rough to suit
Ears long accustomed to the pleasing lute;
They scorned his inspiration and his theme,
Pronounced him frantic, and his fears a dream;
With self-indulgence winged the fleeting hours,
Till the foe found them, and down fell their towers.
Long time Assyria bound them in her chain,
Till penitence had purged the public stain,
And Cyrus, with relenting pity moved,
Returned them happy to the land they loved;
There, proof against prosperity, a while
They stood the test of her ensnaring smile,
And had the grace in scenes of peace to show
The virtue they had learned in scenes of wo.
But man is frail, and can but ill sustain
A long immunity from grief and pain;
And after all the joys that Plenty leads,
With tiptoe step Vice silently succeeds.
When he that ruled them with a shepherd's rod
In form a man, in dignity a God,
Came, not expected in that humble guise,
To sift and search them with unerring eyes,
He found, concealed beneath a fair outside,
The filth of rottenness, and worm of pride;
Their piety a system of deceit,
Scripture employed to sanctify the cheat;
The Pharisee the dupe of his own art,
Self-idolized, and yet a knave at heart.
When nations are to perish in their sins
'Tis in the church the leprosy begins;

The priest, whose office is with zeal sincere
To watch the fountain, and preserve it clear,
Carelessly nods and sleeps upon the brink,
While others poison what the flock must drink;
Or, waking at the call of lust alone,
Infuses lies and errors of his own:
His unsuspecting sheep believe it pure;
And, tainted by the very means of cure,
Catch from each other a contagious spot,
The foul fore-runner of a general rot.
Then Truth is hushed, that Heresy may preach:
And all is trash, that Reason can not reach:
Then God's own image on the soul impressed,
Becomes a mock'ry, and a standing jest;
And faith, the root whence only can arise
The graces of a life that wins the skies,
Loses at once all value and esteem,
Pronounced by gray-beards a pernicious dream;
Then Ceremony leads her bigots forth,
Prepared to fight for shadows of no worth;
While truths, on which eternal things depend,
Find not, or hardly find, a single friend;
As soldiers watch the signal of command,
They learn to bow, to kneel, to sit, to stand;
Happy to fill Religion's vacant place
With hollow form, and gesture, and grimace.

Such, when the Teacher of his church was there,
People and priest, the sons of Israel were;
Stiff in the letter, lax in the design
And import of their oracles divine;
Their learning legendary, false, absurd,
And yet exalted above God's own word;
They drew a curse from an intended good,
Puffed up with gifts they never understood.
He judged them with as terrible a frown,
As if not love, but wrath, had brought him down:
Yet he was gentle as soft summer airs,
Had grace for others' sins, but none for theirs;
Through all he spoke a noble plainness ran—
Rhet'ric is artifice, the work of man;
And tricks and turns, that fancy may devise,
Are far too mean for Him that rules the skies.
Th' astonished vulgar trembled while he tore
The mask from faces never seen before;
He stripped th' impostors in the noonday sun,
Showed that they followed all they seemed to shun;
Their pray'rs made public, their excesses kept
As private as the chambers where they slept;
The temple and its holy rites profaned
By mumm'ries he that dwelt in it disdained;
Uplifted hands, that at convenient times
Could act extortion and the worst of crimes,
Washed with a neatness scrupulously nice,
And free from every taint but that of vice.
Judgment, however tardy, mends her pace
When Obstinacy once has conquered Grace.
They saw distemper healed and life restored,
In answer to the fiat of his word;
Confessed the wonder, and with daring tongue
Blasphemed th' authority from which it sprung.
They knew by sure prognostics seen on high,
The future tone and temper of the sky;
But, grave dissemblers could not understand
That Sin let loose speaks punishment at hand

Ask now of history's authentic page,
And call up evidence from ev'ry age;
Display with busy and laborious hand
The blessings of the most indebted land;
What nation will you find whose annals prove
So rich an interest in almighty love?
Where dwell they now, where dwelt in ancient day
A people planted, watered, blest as they?
Let Egypt's plagues and Canaan's woes proclaim
The favours poured upon the Jewish name;
Their freedom purchased for them at the cost
Of all their hard oppressors valued most;
Their title to a country not their own,
Made sure by prodigies till then unknown;
For them the states they left, made waste and void:
For them the states to which thew went, destroyed;
A cloud to measure out their march by day,
By night a fire to cheer the gloomy way;
That moving signal summoning, when best,
Their host to move, and when it stayed to rest.
For them the rocks dissolved into a flood,
The dews condensed into angelic food,
Their very garments sacred, old yet new,
And Time forbid to touch them as he flew;
Streams, swelled above the bank, enjoined to stand
While they passed through to their appointed land.
Their leader armed with meekness, zeal, and love
And graced with clear credentials from above;
Themselves secured beneath th' Almighty wing!
Their God their captain,* lawgiver, and king;
Crowned with a thousand vict'ries, and at last
Lords of the conquered soil, there rooted fast,
In peace possessing what they won by war,
Their name far published, and revered as far;
Where will you find a race like theirs, endowed
With all that man e'er wished or Heav'n bestowed?

They, and they only, amongst all mankind,
Received the transcript of th' eternal mind;
Were trusted with his own engraven laws,
And constituted guardians of his cause;
Theirs were the prophets, theirs the priestly call;
And theirs by birth the Saviour of us all.
In vain the nations, that had seen them rise
With fierce and envious yet admiring eyes,
Had sought to crush them, guarded as they were
By power divine, and skill that could not err.
Had they maintained allegiance firm and sure,
And kept the faith immaculate and pure,
Then the proud eagles of all-conquering Rome
Had found one city not to be o'ercome;

* Vide Joshua v. 14.

And the twelve standards of the tribes unfurled
Had bid defiance to the warring world.
But grace abused brings forth the foulest deeds,
As richest soil the most luxuriant weeds.
Cured of the golden calves, their father's sin,
They set up self, that idol god within;
Viewed a Deliv'rer with disdain and hate,
Who left them still a tributary state;
Seized fast his hand, held out to set them free
From a worse yoke, and nailed it to the tree:
There was the consummation and the crown,
The flower of Israel's infamy full blown;
Thence date their sad declension and their fall,
Their woes, not yet repealed, thence date them all.

Thus fell the best instructed in her day,
And the most favoured land, look where we may.
Philosophy indeed on Grecian eyes
Had poured the day, and cleared the Roman skies:
In other climes perhaps creative art,
With power surpassing theirs, performed her part,
Might give more life to marble, or might fill
The glowing tablets with a juster skill,
Might shine in fable, and grace idle themes
With all th' embroidery of poetic dreams;
'Twas theirs alone to dive into the plan,
That truth and mercy had revealed to man;
And while the world beside, that plan unknown,
Deified useless wood, or senseless stone,
They breathed in faith their well-directed prayers,
And the true God, the God of truth, was theirs.

Their glory faded, and their race dispersed,
The last of nations now, though once the first;
They warn and teach the proudest, would they learn,
Keep wisdom, or meet vengeance in your turn;
If we escaped not, if Heaven spared not us,
Peeled, scattered, and exterminated thus;
If vice received her retribution due,
When we were visited, what hope for you?
When God arises with an awful frown
To punish lust, or pluck presumption down;
When gifts perverted, or not duly prized,
Pleasures o'ervalued, and his grace despised,
Provoke the vengeance of his righteous hand,
To pour down wrath upon a thankless land;
He will be found impartially severe,
Too just to wink, or speak the guilty clear.

Oh Israel, of all nations most undone!
Thy diadem displaced, thy sceptre gone;
Thy temple, once thy glory, fallen and rased,
And thou a worshipper e'en where thou mayst;
Thy services, once holy, without a spot,
Mere shadows now, their ancient pomp forgot;
Thy Levites, once a consecrated host,
No longer Levites, and their lineage lost,
And thou thyself o'er country sown,
With none on earth that thou canst call thine own;

Cry aloud, thou that sittest in the dust,
Cry to the proud, the cruel, and unjust;
Knock at the gates of nations, rouse their fears
Say wrath is coming, and the storm appears;
But raise the shrillest cry in British ears.

What ails thee, restless as the waves that roar,
And fling their foam against thy chalky shore?
Mistress, at least while Providence shall please,
And trident-bearing queen of the wide seas—
Why, having kept good faith, and often shown
Friendship and truth to others, find'st thou none?
Thou that hast set the persecuted free,
None interposes now to succour thee.
Countries indebted to thy power, that shine
With light derived from thee, would smother thine;
Thy very children watch for thy disgrace—
A lawless brood, and curse thee to thy face.
Thy rulers load thy credit, year by year,
With sums Peruvian mines could never clear;
As if, like arches built with skilful hand,
The more 'twere pressed the firmer it would stand.
The cry in all thy ships is still the same,
Speed us away to battle and to fame.
Thy mariners explore the wild expanse,
Impatient to descry the flags of France;
But, though they fight as thine have ever fought,
Return ashamed without the wreaths they sought.
Thy senate is a scene of civil jar,
Chaos of contrarieties at war;
Where sharp and solid, phlegmatic and light,
Discordant atoms meet, ferment, and fight;
Where Obstinacy takes his sturdy stand,
To disconcert what Policy has planned;
Where Policy is busied all night long
In setting right what Faction has set wrong;
Where flails of oratory thrash the floor,
That yields them chaff and dust, and nothing more.
Thy racked inhabitants repine, complain,
Taxed till the brow of Labour sweats in vain,
War lays a burden on the reeling state,
And peace does nothing to relieve the weight;
Successive loads succeeding broils impose,
And sighing millions prophesy the close.
Is adverse Providence, when pondered well,
So dimly writ, or difficult to spell,
Thou canst not read with readiness and ease
Providence adverse in events like these?
Know then that heavenly wisdom on this ball
Creates, gives birth to, guides, consummates all
That while laborious and quick-thoughted man
Snuffs up the praise of what he seems to plan,
He first conceives, then perfects his design,
As a mere instrument in hands divine:
Blind to the working of that secret power,
That balances the wings of every hour,
The busy trifler dreams himself alone,
Frames many a purpose, and God works his own.

States thrive or wither as moons wax and wane,
Even as his will and his decrees ordain;
While honour, virtue, piety, bear sway,
They flourish; and as these decline, decay;
In just resentment of his injured laws,
He pours contempt on them and on their cause;
Strikes the rough thread of error right athwart
The web of every scheme they have at heart;
Bids rottenness invade and bring to dust
The pillars of support, in which they trust,
And do his errand of disgrace and shame
On the chief strength and glory of the frame.
None ever yet impeded what he wrought,
None bars him out from his most secret thought:
Darkness itself before his eye is light,
And hell's close mischief naked in his sight.
Stand now and judge thyself—Hast thou incurred
His anger, who can waste thee with a word,
Who poises and proportions sea and land,
Weighing them in the hollow of his hand,
And in whose awful sight all nations seem
As grasshoppers, as dust, a drop, a dream?
Hast thou (a sacrilege his soul abhors)
Claimed all the glory of thy prosperous wars?
Proud of thy fleets and armies, stolen the gem
Of his just praise, to lavish it on them?
Hast thou not learned, what thou art often told,
A truth still sacred, and believed of old,
That no success attends on spears and swords
Unblest, and that the battle is the Lord's?
That courage is his creature; and dismay
The post, that at his bidding speeds away,
Ghastly in feature, and his stammering tongue
With doleful humour and sad presage hung,
To quell the valour of the stoutest heart,
And teach the combatant a woman's part?
That he bids thousands fly when none pursue,
Saves as he will by many or by few,
And claims for ever, as his royal right,
The event and sure decision of the fight?
Hast thou, though suckled at fair Freedom's breast,
Exported slavery to the conquered East?
Pulled down the tyrants India served with dread,
And raised thyself, a greater, in their stead?
Gone thither armed and hungry, returned full,
Fed from the richest veins of the Mogul,
A despot big with power obtained by wealth,
And that obtained by rapine and by stealth?
With Asiatic vices stored thy mind,
But left their virtues and thine own behind?
And, having trucked thy soul, brought home the fee,
To tempt the poor to sell himself to thee?
Hast thou by statute shoved from its design
The Saviour's feast, his own blest bread and wine,
And made the symbols of atoning grace
An office-key, a picklock to a place,
That infidels may prove their title good
By an oath dipped in sacramental blood?
A blot that will be still a blot, in spite
Of all that grave apologists may write;
And though a bishop toil to cleanse the stain,
He wipes and scours the silver cup in vain.
And hast thou sworn on every slight pretence,
Till perjuries are common as bad pence,
While thousands, careless of the damning sin,
Kiss the book's outside, who ne'er looked within

Hast thou, when Heaven has clothed thee with disgrace,
(And, long provoked, repaid thee to thy face,
For thou hast known eclipses, and endured
Dimness and anguish, all thy beams obscured,
When sin had shed dishonour on thy brow;
And never of a sabler hue than now,)
Hast thou, with heart perverse and conscience scared,
Despising all rebuke, still persevered,
And having chosen evil, scorned the voice
That cried, Repent?—and gloried in thy choice?
Thy fastings, when calamity at last
Suggests the expedient of a yearly fast,
What mean they? Canst thou dream there is a power
In lighter diet at a later hour,
To charm to sleep the threatening of the skies,
And hide past folly from all-seeing eyes?
The fast, that wins deliverance, and suspends
The stroke, that a vindictive God intends,
Is to renounce hypocrisy; to draw
Thy life upon the pattern of the law;
To war with pleasure, idolized before;
To vanquish lust, and wear its yoke no more.
All fasting else, whate'er be the pretence,
Is wooing mercy by renewed offence.

Hast thou within the sin, that in old time
Brought fire from Heaven, the sex-abusing crime,
Whose horrid perpetration stamps disgrace,
Baboons are free from, upon human race?
Think on the fruitful and well-watered spot,
That fed the flocks and herds of wealthy Lot,
Where Paradise seemed still vouchsafed on earth,
Burning and scorched into perpetual dearth,
Or, in his words who damned the base desire,
Suffering the vengeance of eternal fire:
Then nature injured, scandalized, defiled,
Unveiled her blushing cheek, looked on, and smiled;
Beheld with joy the lovely scene defaced,
And praised the wrath, that laid her beauties waste.

Far be the thought from any verse of mine,
And farther still the formed and fixed design,
To thrust the charge of deeds that I detest,
Against an innocent, unconscious breast,
The man that dares traduce, because he can
With safety to himself, is not a man:

An individual is a sacred mark,
Not to be pierced in play, or in the dark;
But public censure speaks a public foe,
Unless a zeal for virtue guide the blow.
The priestly brotherhood, devout, sincere,
From mean self-interest and ambition clear,
Their hope in heaven, servility their scorn,
Prompt to persuade, expostulate, and warn,
Their wisdom pure, and given them from above,
Their usefulness ensured by zeal and love,
As meek as the man Moses, and withal
As bold as in Agrippa's presence Paul,
Should fly the world's contaminating touch,
Holy and unpolluted:—are thine such?
Except a few with Eli's spirit blest,
Hophni and Phineas may describe the rest.
Where shall a teacher look, in days like these,
For ears and hearts, that he can hope to please?
Look to the poor—the simple and the plain
Will hear perhaps thy salutary strain:
Humility is gentle, apt to learn,
Speak but the word, will listen and return.
Alas, not so! the poorest of the flock
Are proud, and set their faces as a rock;
Denied that earthly opulence they choose,
God's better gift they scoff at and refuse.
The rich, the produce of a nobler stem,
Are more intelligent at least—try them.
Oh vain inquiry! they without remorse
Are altogether gone a devious course;
Where beck'ning Pleasure leads them, wildly stray;
Have burst the bands, and cast the yoke away.
Now borne upon the wings of truth sublime,
Review thy dim original and prime.
This island, spot of unreclaimed rude earth,
The cradle that received thee at thy birth,
Was rocked by many a rough Norwegian blast,
And Danish howlings scared thee as they passed;
For thou wast born amid the din of arms,
And sucked a breast that panted with alarms.
While yet thou wast a groveling puling chit,
Thy bones not fashioned, and thy joints not knit,
The Roman taught thy stubborn knee to bow,
Though twice a Cæsar could not bend thee now.
His victory was that of orient light,
When the sun's shafts disperse the gloom of night.
Thy language at this distant moment shows
How much the country to the conqueror owes;
Expressive, energetic, and refined,
It sparkles with the gems he left behind;
He brought thy land a blessing when he came,
He found thee savage, and he left thee tame;
Taught thee to clothe thy pinked and painted hide.
And grace thy figure with a soldier's pride.
He sowed the seeds of order where he went,
Improved thee far beyond his own intent,
And, while he ruled thee by the sword alone,
Made thee at last a warrior like his own.
Religion, if in heavenly truths attired,
Needs only to be seen to be admired;
But thine, as dark as witcheries of the night,
Was formed to harden hearts and shock the sight;
Thy Druids struck the well-hung harps they bore
With fingers deeply died in human gore;
And while the victim slowly bled to death,
Upon the rolling chords rung out his dying breath.
Who brought the lamp, that with awakening beams
Dispelled thy gloom, and broke away thy dreams,
Tradition, now decrepit and worn out,
Babbler of ancient fables, leaves a doubt:
But still light reached thee; and those gods of thine,
Woden and Thor, each tottering in his shrine,
Fell broken and defaced at his own door,
As Dagon in Philistia long before.
But Rome, with sorceries and magic wand,
Soon raised a cloud that darkened every land;
And thine was smothered in the stench and fog
Of Tiber's marshes and the papal bog.
Then priests, with bulls and briefs, and shaven crowns,
And griping fists, and unrelenting frowns,
Legates and delegates with powers from hell,
Though heavenly in pretension, fleeced thee well;
And to this hour, to keep it fresh in mind,
Some twigs of that old scourge are left behind.*
The soldiery, the Pope's well-managed pack,
Were trained beneath his lash, and knew the smack;
And, when he laid them on the scent of blood,
Would hunt a Saracen through fire and flood.
Lavish of life to win an empty tomb,
That proved a mint of wealth, a mine to Rome,
They left their bones beneath unfriendly skies,
His worthless absolution all the prize.
Thou wast the veriest slave in days of yore,
That ever dragged a chain or tugged an oar;
Thy monarchs, arbitrary, fierce, unjust,
Themselves the slaves of bigotry or lust,
Disdained thy counsels, only in distress
Found thee a goodly sponge for power to press.
Thy chiefs, the lords of many a petty fee,
Provoked and harassed, in return plagued thee;
Called thee away from peaceable employ,
Domestic happiness and rural joy,
To waste thy life in arms, or lay it down
In causeless feuds and bickerings of their own.
Thy parliaments adored on bended knees
The sovereignty they were convened to please;
Whate'er was asked, too timid to resist,
Complied with, and were graciously dismissed;
And if some Spartan soul a doubt expressed,
And, blushing at the tameness of the rest,
Dared to suppose the subject had a choice,
He was a traitor by the general voice.

* Which may be found at Doctors' Commons.

O slave! with powers thou didst not dare exert,
Verse can not stoop so low as thy desert;
It shakes the sides of splenetic Disdain,
Thou self-entitled ruler of the main,
To trace thee to the date when yon fair sea,
That clips thy shores, had no such charms for thee;
When other nations flew from coast to coast,
And thou hadst neither fleet nor flag to boast.

Kneel now, and lay thy forehead in the dust;
Blush, if thou canst; not petrified, thou must:
Act but an honest and a faithful part;
Compare what then thou wast with what thou art;
And God's disposing providence confessed,
Obduracy itself must yield the rest—
Then thou art bound to serve him, and to prove,
Hour after hour, thy gratitude and love.

Has he not bid thee, and thy favoured land,
For ages safe beneath his sheltering hand,
Given thee his blessing on the clearest proof,
Bid nations leagued against thee stand aloof,
And charged Hostility and Hate to roar
Where else they would, but not upon thy shore?
His power secured thee, when presumptuous Spain
Baptized her fleet invincible in vain;
Her gloomy monarch, doubtful and resigned
To every pang that racks an anxious mind,
Asked of the waves, that broke upon his coast,
What tidings? and the surge replied—All lost!
And when the Stuart leaning on the Scot,
Then too much feared, and now too much forgot,
Pierced to the very centre of the realm,
And hoped to seize his abdicated helm,
'Twas but to prove how quickly with a frown
He that had raised thee could have pluck'd thee down.
Peculiar is the grace by thee possessed,
Thy foes implacable, thy land at rest;
Thy thunders travel over earth and seas,
And all at home is pleasure, wealth, and ease.
'Tis thus, extending his tempestuous arm,
Thy Maker fills the nations with alarm,
While his own Heaven surveys the troubled scene,
And feels no change, unshaken and serene.
Freedom, in other lands scarce known to shine,
Pours out a flood of splendour upon thine;
Thou hast as bright an interest in her rays
As ever Roman had in Rome's best days.
True freedom is where no restraint is known,
That Scripture, justice, and good sense disown,
Where only vice and injury are tied,
And all from shore to shore is free beside.
Such freedom is—and Windsor's hoary towers
Stood trembling at the boldness of thy powers,
That won a nymph on that immortal plain
Like her the fabled Phœbus wooed in vain;
He found the laurel only—happier you
Th' unfading laurel, and the virgin too!*

Now think, if Pleasure have a thought to spare;
If God himself be not beneath her care;
If business, constant as the wheels of time,
Can pause an hour to read a serious rhyme;
If the new mail thy merchants now receive,
Or expectation of the next, give leave;
Oh think! if chargeable with deep arrears
For such indulgence gilding all thy years,
How much, though long neglected, shining yet,
The beams of heavenly truth have swelled the debt.
When persecuting zeal made royal sport
With tortured innocence in Mary's court,
And Bonner, blithe as shepherd at a wake,
Enjoyed the show, and danced about the stake
The sacred Book, its value understood,
Received the seal of martyrdom in blood.
Those holy men, so full of truth and grace,
Seem to reflection of a different race;
Meek, modest, venerable, wise, sincere,
In such a cause they could not dare to fear;
They could not purchase earth with such a prize,
Or spare a life too short to reach the skies.
From them to thee conveyed along the tide,
Their streaming hearts poured freely when they died;
Those truths, which neither use nor years impair,
Invite thee, woo thee, to the bliss they share.
What dotage will not vanity maintain?
What web too weak to catch a modern brain?
The moles and bats in full assembly find,
On special search, the keen eyed eagle blind.
And did they dream, and art thou wiser now?
Prove it—if better, I submit and bow.
Wisdom and goodness are twin-born, one heart
Must hold both sisters, never seen apart.
So then—as darkness overspread the deep,
Ere Nature rose from her eternal sleep,
And this delightful earth, and that fair sky,
Leaped out of nothing, called by the Most High;
By such a change thy darkness is made light,
Thy chaos order, and thy weakness might;
And He, whose power mere nullity obeys,
Who found thee nothing, formed thee for his praise.
To praise him is to serve him, and fulfil,
Doing and suffering, his unquestioned will;
'Tis to believe what men inspired of old,
Faithful, and faithfully informed, unfold;
Candid and just, with no false aim in view,
To take for truth, what can not be but true;
To learn in God's own school the Christian part,
And bind the task assigned thee to thine heart:
Happy the man there seeking and there found,
Happy the nation where such men abound.

How shall a verse impress thee? by what name
Shall I adjure thee not to court thy shame?
By theirs, whose bright example unimpeached,
Directs thee to that eminence they reached,

* Alluding to the grant of Magna Charta, which was extorted from King John by the barons at Runnymede near Windsor

Heroes and worthies of days past, thy sires?
Or his, who touched their hearts with hallowed fires
Their names, alas! in vain reproach an age,
Whom all the vanities they scorned engage!
And His, that seraphs tremble at, is hung
Disgracefully on every trifler's tongue,
Or serves the champion in forensic war,
To flourish and parade with at the bar.
Pleasure herself perhaps suggests a plea,
If interest move thee, to persuade e'en thee;
By every charm that smiles upon her face,
By joys possessed, and joys still held in chase,
If dear society be worth a thought,
And if the feast of freedom cloy thee not,
Reflect that these, and all that seem thine own,
Held by the tenure of his will alone,
Like angels in the service of their Lord,
Remain with thee, or leave thee at his word;
That gratitude and temperance in our use
Of what he gives, unsparing and profuse,
Secure the favour, and enhance the joy,
That thankless waste and wild abuse destroy.
But above all reflect, how cheap soe'er
Those rights, that millions envy thee, appear,
And, though resolved to risk them, and swim down
The tide of pleasure, heedless of His frown,
That blessings truly sacred, and when given
Marked with the signature and stamp of Heaven,
The word of prophecy, those truths divine,
Which make that Heaven, if thou desire it, thine,
(Awful alternative! believed, beloved,
Thy glory, and thy shame if unimproved,)
Are never long vouchsafed, if pushed aside
With cold disgust or philosophic pride!
And that, judicially withdrawn, disgrace,
Error, and darkness occupy their place.

A world is up in arms, and thou, a spot
Not quickly found, if negligently sought,
Thy soul as ample as thy bounds are small,
Endures the brunt, and darest defy them all.
And wilt shou join to this bold enterprise
A bolder still, a contest with the skies?
Remember, if He guard thee and secure,
Whoe'er assails thee, thy success is sure;
But if He leave thee, though the skill and power
Of nations sworn to spoil thee and devour,
Were all collected in thy single arm,
And thou couldst laugh away the fear of harm,
That strength would fail, opposed against the push
And feeble onset of a pigmy rush.

Say not (and if the thought of such defence
Should spring within thy bosom, drive it thence)
What nation amongst all my foes is free
From crimes as base as any charged on me?
Their measure filled, they too shall pay the debt,
Which God, though long forborne, will not forget.
But know what wrath divine, when most severe,
Makes justice still the guide of his career,
And will not punish, in one mingled crowd,
Them without light, and thee without a cloud.

Muse, hang this harp upon yon aged beach,
Still murmuring with the solemn truths I teach;
And while at intervals a cold blast sings
Through the dry leaves, and pants upon the strings,
My soul shall sigh in secret, and lament
A nation scourged, yet tardy to repent.
I know the warning song is sung in vain;
That few will hear, and fewer heed the strain;
But if a sweeter voice, and one designed
A blessing to my country and mankind,
Reclaim the wandering thousands, and bring home
A flock so scattered and so wont to roam,
Then place it once again between my knees;
The sound of truth will then be sure to please:
And truth alone, where'er my life be cast,
In scenes of plenty, or the pining waste,
Shall be my chosen theme, my glory to the last.

Hope.

. . . . doceas iter, et sacra ostia pandas.—*Virg.* Æn. 6.

Ask what is human life—the sage replies,
With disappointment lowering in his eyes,
A painful passage o'er a restless flood,
A vain pursuit of fugitive false good,
A scene of fancied bliss and heart-felt care,
Closing at last in darkness and despair.
The poor inured to drudgery and distress,
Act without aim, think little, and feel less,
And no where, but in feigned Arcadian scenes,
Taste happiness, or know what pleasure means.
Riches are passed away from hand to hand,
As fortune, vice, or folly may command;
As in a dance the pair that take the lead
Turn downward, and the lowest pair succeed,
So shifting and so various is the plan,
By which Heaven rules the mixed affairs of man;
Vicissitude wheels round the motley crowd,
The rich grow poor, the poor become purse-proud;
Business is labour, and man's weakness such,
Pleasure is labour too, and tires as much.
The very sense of it foregoes its use,
By repetition palled, by age obtuse.
Youth lost in dissipation we deplore,
Through life's sad remnant, what no sighs restore,

Our years, a fruitless race without a prize,
Too many, yet too few to make us wise.
Dangling his cane about, and taking snuff,
Lothario cries, What philosophic stuff—
O querulous and weak!—whose useless brain
Once thought of nothing, and now thinks in vain;
Whose eyes reverted weeps o'er all the past,
Whose prospect shows thee a disheartening waste;
Would age in thee resign his wintry reign,
And youth invigorate that frame again,
Renewed desire would grace with other speech,
Joys always prized, when placed within our reach.
For lift thy palsied head, shake off the gloom
That overhangs the borders of thy tomb,
See Nature gay, as when she first began,
With smiles alluring her admirer man;
She spreads the morning over eastern hills,
Earth glitters with the drops the night distils;
The Sun obedient at her call appears,
To fling his glories o'er the robe she wears;
Banks clothed with flowers, groves filled with sprightly sounds,
The yellow tilth, green meads, rocks, rising grounds,
Streams edged with osiers, fattening every field,
Where'er they flow, now seen and now concealed;
From the blue rim, where skies and mountains meet,
Down to the very turf beneath thy feet,
Ten thousand charms, that only fools despise,
Or pride can look at with indifferent eyes,
All speak one language, all with one sweet voice
Cry to her universal realm, Rejoice!
Man feels the spur of passions and desires,
And she gives largely more than he requires;
Not that his hours devoted all to Care,
Hollow-eyed Abstinence, and lean Despair,
The wretch may pine, while to his smell, taste, sight,
She holds a paradise of rich delight;
But gently to rebuke his awkward fear,
To prove that what she gives, she gives sincere;
To banish hesitation, and proclaim
His happiness, her dear, her only aim.
'Tis grave philosophy's absurdest dream,
That Heaven's intentions are not what they seem.
That only shadows are dispensed below,
And earth has no reality but wo.
Thus things terrestrial wear a different hue,
As youth or age persuades; and neither true.
So Flora's wreath through coloured crystal seen,
The rose or lily appears blue or green,
But still th' imputed tints are those alone
The medium represents, and not their own.
To rise at noon, sit slipshod and undressed,
To read the news, or fiddle, as seems best,
Till half the world comes rattling at his door,
To fill the dull vacuity till four;
And, just when evening turns the blue vault gray,
To spend two hours in dressing for the day;
To make the sun a bauble without use,
Save for the fruits his heavenly beams produce;
Quite to forget, or deem it worth no thought,
Who bids him shine, or if he shine or not;
Through mere necessity to close his eyes
Just when the larks and when the shepherds rise;
Is such a life, so tediously the same,
So void of all utility or aim,
That poor *Jonquil*, with almost every breath
Sighs for his exit, vulgarly called death;
For he, with all his follies, has a mind
Not yet so blank, or fashionably blind,
But now and then perhaps a feeble ray
Of distant wisdom shoots across his way,
By which he reads, that life without a plan,
As useless as the moment it began,
Serves merely as a soil for discontent
To thrive in; an encumbrance ere half spent
Oh weariness beyond what asses feel,
That tread ths circuit of the cistern wheel;
A dull rotation, never at a stay,
Yesterday's face twin image of to-day;
While conversation, an exhausted stock,
Grows drowsy as the clicking of a clock.
No need, he cries, of gravity stuffed out
With academic dignity devout,
To read wise lectures, vanity the text:
Proclaim the remedy, ye learned, next;
For truth self-evident, with pomp impressed,
Is vanity surpassing all the rest.

That remedy, not hid in deeps profound,
Yet seldom sought where only to be found,
While poison turns aside from its due scope
Th' inquirer's aim, that remedy is hope.
Life is His gift, from whom whate'er life needs
With every good and perfect gift, proceeds;
Bestowed on man, like all that we partake,
Royally, freely, for his bounty's sake;
Transient indeed, as is the fleeting hour,
And yet the seed of an immortal flower;
Designed in honour of his endless love,
To fill with fragrance his abode above;
No trifle, howsoever short it seem,
And, howsoever shadowy, no dream!
Its value, what no thought can ascertain,
Nor all an angel's eloquence explain;
Men deal with life as children with their play,
Who first misuse, then cast their toys away
Live to no sober purpose, and contend
That their Creator had no serious end.
When God and man stand opposite in view,
Man's disappointment must of course ensue.
The just Creator condescends to write,
In beams of inextinguishable light,
His names of wisdom, goodness, power, and love
On all that blooms below, or shines above,
To catch the wandering notice of mankind
And teach the world, if not perversely blind,

His gracious attributes, and prove the share
His offspring hold in his paternal care.
If, led from earthly things to things divine,
His creature thwart not his august design,
Then praise is heard instead of reasoning pride,
And captious cavil and complaint subside.
Nature, employed in her allotted place,
Is hand-maid to the purposes of Grace;
By good vouchsafed makes known superior good,
And bliss not seen by blessings understood:
That bliss, revealed in Scripture, with a glow
Bright as the covenant-ensuring bow,
Fires all his feelings with a noble scorn
Of sensual evil, and thus Hope is born.
Hope sets the stamp of vanity on all
That men have deemed substantial since the fall,
Yet has the wondrous virtue to educe
From emptiness itself a real use;
And while she takes, as at a father's hand,
What health and sober appetite demand,
From fading good derives, with chymic art,
That lasting happiness, a thankful heart.
Hope, with uplifted foot set free from earth,
Pants for the place of her ethereal birth,
On steady wings sails through th' immense abyss,
Plucks amaranthine joys from bowers of bliss,
And crowns the soul, while yet a mourner here,
With wreaths like those triumphant spirits wear.
Hope, as an anchor firm and sure, holds fast
The Christian vessel, and defies the blast.
Hope! nothing else can nourish and secure
His new-born virtues, and preserve him pure.
Hope! let the wretch, once conscious of the joy,
Whom now despairing agonies destroy,
Speak, for he can, and none so well as he,
What treasures centre, what delights in thee.
Had he the gems, the spices, and the land
That boasts the treasure, all at his command;
The fragrant grove, th' inestimable mine,
Were light, when weighed against one smile of thine.
Though, clasped and cradled in his nurse's arms,
He shines with all a cherub's artless charms,
Man is the genuine offspring of revolt,
Stubborn and sturdy, as a wild ass' colt;
His passions, like the watery stores that sleep
Beneath the smiling surface of the deep,
Wait but the lashes of a wintry storm,
To frown and roar, and shake his feeble form.
From infancy through childhood's giddy maze,
Froward at school, and fretful in his plays,
The puny tyrant burns to subjugate
The free republic of the whip-gig state.
If one, his equal in athletic frame,
Or, more provoking still, of nobler name,
Dare step across his arbitrary views,
An Iliad, only not in verse, ensues:
The little Grecks look trembling at the scales,
Till the best tongue, or heaviest hand, prevails.

Now see him launched into the world at large;
If priest, supinely droning o'er his charge,
Their fleece his pillow, and his weekly drawl,
Though short, too long, the price he pays for all.
If lawyer, loud, whatever cause he plead,
But proudest of the worst, if that succeed.
Perhaps a grave physician, gathering fees,
Punctually paid for lengthening out disease;
No Cotton, whose humanity sheds rays,
That make superior skill his second praise.
If arms engage him, he devotes to sport
His date of life, so likely to be short;
A soldier may be any thing, if brave,
So may a tradesman, if not quite a knave.
Such stuff the world is made of; and mankind
To passion, interest, pleasure, whim resigned,
Insist on, as if each were his own pope,
Forgiveness, and the privilege of hope.
But Conscience, in some awful silent hour,
When captivating lusts have lost their power,
Perhaps when sickness, or some fearful dream,
Reminds him of religion, hated theme!
Starts from the down, on which she lately slept
And tells of laws despised, at least not kept:
Shows with a pointing finger, but no noise,
A pale procession of past sinful joys,
All witnesses of blessings foully scorned,
And life abused, and not to be suborned.
Mark these, she says; these summoned from afar,
Begin their march to meet thee at the bar;
There find a Judge inexorably just,
And perish there, as all presumption must.
Peace be to those (such peace as Earth can give)
Who live in pleasure, dead e'en while they live;
Born capable indeed of heavenly truth;
But down to latest age, from earliest youth
Their mind a wilderness through want of care,
The plough of wisdom never entering there.
Peace, (if in sensibility may claim
A right to the meek honours of her name)
To men of pedigree, their noble race,
Emulous always of the nearest place
To any throne, except the throne of Grace.
Let cottagers and unenlightened swains
Revere the laws they dream that Heaven ordains:
Resort on Sundays to the house of prayer,
And ask, and fancy they find blessings there.
Themselves, perhaps, when weary they retreat
T' enjoy cool nature in a country seat,
T' exchange the centre of a thousand trades,
For clumps, and lawns, and temples, and cascades,
May now and then their velvet cushions take,
And seem to pray for good example's sake;
Judging, in charity no doubt, the town
Pious enough, and having need of none.
Kind souls! to teach their tenantry to prize
What they themselves, without remorse, despise:
Nor hope have they, nor fear, of aught to come,
As well for them had prophecy been dumb;

They could have held the conduct they pursue,
Had Paul of Tarsus lived and died a Jew;
And truth, proposed to reasoners wise as they,
Is a pearl cast—completely cast away.
They die—Death lends them, pleased, and as in sport,
All the grim honours of his ghastly court.
Far other paintings grace the chamber now,
Where late we saw the mimic landscape glow:
The busy heralds hang the sable scene
With mournful 'scutcheons, and dim lamps between;
Proclaim their titles to the crowd around,
But they that wore them move not at the sound;
The coronet, placed idly at their head,
Adds nothing now to the degraded dead;
And e'en the star, that glitters on the bier,
Can only say—Nobility lies here.
Peace to all such—'twere pity to offend,
By useless censure, whom we can not mend;
Life without hope can close but in despair,
'Twas there we found them, and must leave them there.
As, when two pilgrims in a forest stray,
Both may be lost, yet each in his own way;
So fares it with the multitudes beguiled
In vain Opinion's waste and dangerous wild;
Ten thousand rove the brakes and thorns among,
Some eastward, and some westward, and all wrong.
But here, alas! the fatal difference lies,
Each man's belief is right in his own eyes;
And he that blames what they have blindly chose,
Incurs resentment for the love he shows.
Say, botanist, within whose province fall
The cedar and the hyssop on the wall,
Of all that deck the lanes, the fields, the bowers,
What parts the kindred tribes of weeds and flowers?
Sweet scent, or lovely form, or both combined,
Distinguish every cultivated kind;
The want of both denotes a meaner breed,
And Chloe from her garland picks the weed.
Thus hopes of every sort, whatever sect
Esteem them, sow them, rear them, and protect,
If wild in nature, and not duly found,
Gethsemane! in thy dear hallowed ground,
That can not bear the blaze of Scripture light,
Nor cheer the spirit, nor refresh the sight,
Nor animate the soul to Christian deeds,
(Oh cast them from thee!) are weeds, arrant weeds.
Ethelred's house, the centre of six ways,
Diverging each from each, like equal rays,
Himself as bountiful as April rains,
Lord paramount of the surrounding plains,
Would give relief of bed and board to none
But guests that sought it in th' appointed *One;*
And they might enter at his open door,
E'en till his spacious hall would hold no more.
He sent a servant forth by every road,
To sound his horn, and publish it abroad,
That all might mark—knight, menial, high, and low,
An ordinance it concerned them all to know.
If, after all, some headstrong hardy lout
Would disobey, though sure to be shut out,
Could he with reason murmur at his case,
Himself sole author of his own disgrace?
No! the decree was just and without flaw;
And he, that made, had right to make, the law;
His sovereign power and pleasure unrestrained,
The wrong was his who wrongfully complained.
Yet half mankind maintain a churlish strife
With Him, the donor of eternal life,
Because the deed, by which his love confirms
The largess he bestows, prescribes the terms.
Compliance with his will your lot ensures,
Accept it only, and the boon is yours.
And sure it is as kind to smile and give,
As with a frown to say, Do this, and live.
Love is not pedler's trumpery bought and sold:
He *will* give freely, or he *will* withhold;
His soul abhors a mercenary thought,
And him as deeply who abhors it not;
He stipulates indeed, but merely this,
That man will freely take an unbought bliss,
Will trust him for a faithful generous part,
Nor set a price upon a willing heart.
Of all the ways that seems to promise fair,
To place you where his saints his presence share,
This only can; for this plain cause, expressed
In terms as plain, Himself has shut the rest.
But oh the strife, the bickering, and debate,
The tidings of unpurchased Heaven create!
The flirted fan, the bridle, and the toss,
All speakers, yet all language at a loss.
From stuccoed walls smart argument rebound;
And beaux, adepts in every thing profound,
Die of disdain, or whistle off the sound.
Such is the clamour of rooks, daws, and kites,
Th' explosion of the levelled tube excites,
Where mouldering abbey-walls o'erhang the glade,
And oaks coeval spread a mournful shade;
The screaming nations, hovering in mid air,
Loudly resent the stranger's freedom there,
And seem to warn him never to repeat
His bold intrusion on their dark retreat.
Adieu, Vinosa cries, ere yet he sips
The purple bumper trembling at his lips,
Adieu to all morality! if Grace
Make works a vain ingredient in the case.
The Christian hope is—Waiter, draw the cork—
If I mistake not—Blockhead! with a fork!
Without good works, whatever some may boast,
Mere folly and delusion—Sir, your toast.
My firm persuasion is, at least sometimes,
That Heaven will weigh man's virtues and his crimes

With nice attention, in a righteous scale,
And save or damn as these or those prevail.
I plant my foot upon this ground of trust,
And silence every fear with—God is just.
But if perchance on some dull drizzling day
A thought intrude, that says, or seems to say,
If thus th' important cause is to be tried,
Suppose the beam should dip on the wrong
I soon recover from these needless frights,
And God is merciful—sets all to rights.
Thus between justice, as my prime support,
And mercy, fled to as the last resort,
I glide and steal along with Heaven in view,
And,—pardon me, the bottle stands with you.
I never will believe, the Colonel cries,
The sanguinary schemes, that some devise
Who make the good Creator on their plan
A being of less equity than man.
If appetite, or what divines call lust,
Which men comply with, e'en because they must,
Be punished with perdition, who is pure?
Then theirs, no doubt, as well as mine, is sure.
If sentence of eternal pain belong
To every sudden slip and transient wrong,
Then Heaven enjoins the fallible and frail
A hopeless task, and damns them if they fail
My creed (whatever some creed-makers mean
By Athanasian nonsense, or Nicene)—
My creed is, he is safe that does his best,
And death's a doom sufficient for the rest.
Right, says an ensign; and, for aught I see,
Your faith and mine substantially agree;
The best of every man's performance here
Is to discharge the duties of his sphere.
A lawyer's dealings should be just and fair,
Honesty shines with great advantage there.
Fasting and prayer sit well upon a priest,
A decent caution and reserve at least.
A soldier's best is courage in the field,
With nothing here that wants to be concealed;
Manly deportment, gallant, easy, gay;
A hand as liberal as the light of day.
The soldier thus endowed who never shrinks,
Nor closets up his thoughts, whate'er he thinks,
Who scorns to do an injury by stealth,
Must go to Heaven—and I must drink his health.
Sir Smug, he cries, (for lowest at the board,
Just made fifth chaplain of his patron lord,
His shoulders witnessing, by many a shrug,
How much his feelings suffered, sat Sir Smug,)
Your office is to winnow false from true;
Come, prophet, drink, and tell us what think you?
Sighing and smiling as he takes his glass,
Which they that woo preferment rarely pass,
Fallible man, the church-bred youth replies,
Is still found fallible, however wise;
And differing judgments serve but to declare,
That truth lies somewhere, if we knew but where.
Of all it ever was my lot to read,
Of critics now alive, or long since dead,
The book of all the world that charmed me most
Was,—welladay, the title-page was lost;
The writer well remarks, a heart that knows
To take with gratitude what Heaven bestows,
With prudence always ready at our call,
To guide our use of it, is all in all.
Doubtless it is.—To which of my own store
I superadd a few essentials more;
But these, excuse the liberty I take,
I waive just now, for conversation's sake.—
Spoke like an oracle, they all exclaim,
And add Right Reverend to Smug's honoured name.
And yet our lot is given us in a land,
Where busy arts are never at a stand;
Where Science points her telescopic eye,
Familiar with the wonders of the sky;
Where bold Inquiry, diving out of sight,
Brings many a precious pearl of truth to light;
Where nought eludes the persevering quest
That fashion, taste, or luxury, suggest.
But, above all, in her own light arrayed,
See Mercy's grand apocalypse displayed!
The sacred book no longer suffers wrong,
Bound in the fetters of an unknown tongue:
But speaks with plainness, art could never mend,
What simplest minds can soonest comprehend.
God gives the word, the preachers throng around,
Live from his lips, and spread the glorious sound
That sound bespeaks Salvation on her way,
The trumpet of a life-restoring day;
'Tis heard where England's eastern glory shines,
And in the gulfs of her Cornubian mines.
And still it spreads. See Germany send forth
Her sons* to pour it on the farthest north:
Fired with a zeal peculiar, *they* defy
The rage and vigour of a polar sky,
And plant successfully sweet Sharon's rose
On icy plains, and in eternal snows.
O blest within th' enclosure of your rocks,
Nor herds have ye to boast, nor bleating flocks;
No fertilizing streams your fields divide,
That show reversed the villas on their side;
No groves have ye; no cheerful sound of bird,
Or voice of turtle, in your land is heard:
Nor grateful eglantine regales the smell
Of those, that walk at evening where ye dwell:
But Winter, armed with terrors here unknown,
Sits absolute on his unshaken throne;
Piles up his stores amidst the frozen waste,
And bids the mountains he has built stand fast,
Beckons the legions of his storms away
From happier scenes, to make your land a prey,
Proclaims the soil a conquest he has won,
And scorns to share it with the distant sun.

*The Moravian Missionaries in Greenland. *See* Kranz.

Yet Truth is yours, remote, unenvied isle!
And Peace, the genuine offspring of her smile;
The pride of lettered Ignorance, that binds
In chains of error our accomplished minds,
That decks, with all the splendour of the true,
A false religion, is unknown to you.
Nature, indeed, vouchsafes for our delight
The sweet vicissitudes of day and night:
Soft airs and genial moisture feed and cheer
Field, fruit, and flower, and every creature here;
But brighter beams than his who fires the skies,
Have risen at length on your admiring eyes,
That shoot into your darkest caves the day,
From which our nicest optics turn away.

Here see th' encouragement Grace gives to vice,
The dire effect of mercy without price!
What were they? what some fools are made by art,
They were by nature, atheists, head and heart.
The gross idolatry blind heathens teach
Was too refined for them, beyond their reach.
Not e'en the glorious Sun, though men revere
The monarch most, that seldom will appear,
And though his beams that quicken where they shine,
May claim some right to be esteemed divine,
Not e'en the sun, desirable as rare,
Could bend one knee, engage one votary there;
They were, what base Credulity believes
True Christians are, dissemblers, drunkards, thieves.
The full-gorged savage, at his nauseous feast,
Spent half the darkness, and snored out the rest,
Was one whom Justice, on an equal plan,
Denouncing death upon the sins of man,
Might almost have indulged with an escape,
Chargeable only with a human shape.

What are they now?—Morality may spare
Her grave concern, her kind suspicions there:
The wretch, who once sang wildly, danced and laughed
And sucked in dizzy madness with his draught,
Has wept a silent flood, reversed his ways,
Is sober, meek, benevolent, and prays,
Feeds sparingly, communicates his store,
Abhors the craft he boasted of before,
And he that stole, has learned to steal no more.
Well spake the prophet, Let the desert sing,
Where sprang the thorn, the spiry fir shall spring,
And where unsightly and rank thistles grew,
Shall grow the myrtle and luxuriant yew.

Go now, and with important tone demand
On what foundation virtue is to stand,
If self-exalting claims be turned adrift,
And grace be grace indeed, and life a gift;
The poor reclaimed inhabitant, his eyes
Glistening at once with pity and surprise,
Amazed that shadows should obscure the sight
Of one, whose birth was in a land of light,
Shall answer, Hope, sweet Hope, has set me free.
And made all pleasures else mere dross to me.

These, amidst scenes as waste as if denied
The common care that waits on all beside,
Wild as if Nature there, void of all good,
Played only gambols in a frantic mood,
(Yet charge not heavenly skill with having planned
A plaything world, unworthy of his hand,)
Can see his love, though secret evil lurks
In all we touch, stamped plainly on his works,
Deem life a blessing with its numerous woes,
Nor spurn away a gift a God bestows.
Hard task, indeed, o'er arctic seas to roam!
Is hope exotic? grows it not at home?
Yes, but an object, bright as orient morn,
May press the eye too closely to be borne;
A distant virtue we can all confess,
It hurts our pride, and moves our envy, less.

Leuconomus (beneath well sounding Greek
I slur a name a poet must not speak)
Stood pilloried on Infamy's high stage,
And bore the pelting scorn of half an age;
The very butt of Slander, and the blot
For every dart that Malice ever shot.
The man that mentioned *him* at once dismissed
All mercy from his lips, and sneered and hissed;
His crimes were such as Sodom never knew,
And Perjury stood up to swear all true;
His aim was mischief, and his zeal pretence,
His speech rebellion against common sense;
A knave, when tried on honesty's plain rule;
And when by that of reason, a mere fool;
The world's best comfort was, his doom was passed;
Die when he might, he must be damned at last.

Now, Truth, perform thine office; waft aside
The curtain drawn by Prejudice and Pride,
Reveal (the man is dead) to wondering eyes
This more than monster, in his proper guise.
He loved the world that hated him: the tear
That dropt upon his Bible was sincere:
Assailed by scandal and the tongue of strife,
His only answer was a blameless life;
And he that forged, and he that threw the dart,
Had each a brother's interest in his heart.
Paul's love of Christ, and steadiness unbribed,
Were copied close in him, and well transcribed.
He followed Paul, his zeal a kindred flame,
His apostolic charity the same.
Like him, crossed cheerfully tempestuous seas,
Forsaking country, kindred, friends, and ease;
Like him he laboured, and like him content
To bear it, suffered shame where'er he went.
Blush, Calumny! and write upon his tomb,
If honest Eulogy can spare thee room,
Thy deep repentance of thy thousand lies,
Which, aimed at him, have pierced the offended skies!
And say, blot out my sin, confessed, deplored
Against thine image, in thy saint, O Lord!

No blinder bigot, I maintain it still,
Than he who must have pleasure, come what will:
He laughs, whatever weapon Truth may draw,
And deems her sharp artillery mere straw.
Scripture indeed is plain; but God and he
On Scripture ground are sure to disagree;
Some wiser rule must teach him how to live,
Than this his Maker has seen fit to give;
Supple and flexible as Indian cane,
To take the bend his appetites ordain;
Contrived to suit frail Nature's crazy case,
And reconcile his lusts with saving grace.
By this, with nice precision of design,
He draws upon life's map a zigzag line,
That shows how far 'tis safe to follow sin,
And where his danger and God's wrath begin.
By this he forms, as pleased he sports along,
His well-poised estimate of right and wrong;
And finds the modish manners of the day,
Though loose, as harmless as an infant's play.
Build by whatever plan Caprice decrees,
With what materials, on what ground you please;
Your hope shall stand unblamed, perhaps admired,
If not that hope the Scripture has required.
The strange conceits, vain projects and wild dreams,
With which hypocrisy for ever teems,
(Though other follies strike the public eye,
And raise a laugh,) pass unmolested by;
But if, unblameable in word or thought,
A *man* arise, a man whom God has taught,
With all Elijah's dignity of tone,
And all the love of the beloved John,
To storm the citadels they build in air,
And smite the untempered wall; 'tis death to spare.
To sweep away all refuges of lies,
And place, instead of quirks themselves devise,
Lama Sabacthani before their eyes;
To prove, that without Christ all gain is loss,
All hope despair, that stands not on his cross;
Except the few his God may have impressed,
A tenfold frenzy seizes all the rest.
Throughout mankind, the Christian kind at least,
There dwells a consciousness in every breast,
That folly ends where genuine hope begins,
And he that finds his Heaven must lose his sins.
Nature opposes with her utmost force
This riving stroke, this ultimate divorce;
And, while religion seems to be her view,
Hates with a deep sincerity *the true:*
For this, of all that ever influenced man,
Since Abel worshipped, or the world began,
This only spares no lust, admits no plea,
But makes him, if at all, completely free;
Sounds forth the signal, as she mounts her car,
Of an eternal, universal war;
Rejects all treaty, penetrates all wiles,
Scorns with the same indifference frowns and smiles;
Drives through the realms of Sin, where riot reels,
And grinds his crown beneath her burning wheels!
Hence all that is in man, pride, passion, art,
Powers of the mind, and feelings of the heart,
Insensible of Truth's almighty charms,
Starts at her first approach, and sounds to arms!
While Bigotry, with well-dissembled fears,
His eyes shut fast, his fingers in his ears,
Mighty to parry and push by God's word,
With senseless noise, his argument the sword,
Pretends a zeal for godliness and grace,
And spits abhorrence in the Christian's face.

Parent of Hope, immortal Truth! make known
Thy deathless wreaths, and triumphs all thine own:
The silent progress of thy power is such,
Thy means so feeble, and despised so much,
That few believe the wonders thou hast wrought,
And none can teach them, but whom thou hast taught.
O see me sworn to serve thee, and command
A painter's skill into a poet's hand,
That, while I trembling trace a work divine,
Fancy may stand aloof from the design,
And light, and shade, and every stroke be thine.

If ever thou hast felt another's pain,
If ever when he sighed hast sighed again,
If ever on thy eyelid stood the tear,
That pity had engendered, drop one here.
This man was happy—had the world's good word,
And with it every joy it can afford;
Friendship and love seemed tenderly at strife,
Which most should sweeten his untroubled life;
Politely learned, and of a gentle race,
Good breeding and good sense gave all a grace,
And whether at the toilette of the fair,
He laughed and trifled, made him welcome there,
Or if in masculine debate he shared,
Ensured him mute attention and regard.
Alas, how changed! Expressive of his mind,
His eyes are sunk, arms folded, head reclined;
Those awful syllables, hell, death, and sin,
Though whispered, plainly tell what works within;
That conscience there performs her proper part,
And writes a doomsday sentence on his heart;
Forsaking, and forsaken of all friends,
He now perceives where earthly pleasure ends;
Hard task! for one who lately knew no care,
And harder still as learnt beneath despair;
His hours no longer pass unmarked away,
A dark importance saddens every day;
He hears the notice of the clock perplexed,
And cries, perhaps eternity strikes next;
Sweet music is no longer music here,
And laughter sounds like madness in his ear:
His grief the world of all her power disarms,
Wine has no taste, and beauty has no charms:
God's holy word, once trivial in his view,
Now by the voice of his experience true,
Seems, as it is, the fountain whence alone
Must spring that hope he pants to make his own.

Now let the bright reverse be known abroad;
Say man's a worm, and power belongs to God.
As when a felon, whom his country's laws
Have justly doomed for some atrocious cause,
Expects in darkness and heart-chilling fears,
The shameful close of all his mispent years;
If chance, on heavy pinions slowly borne,
A tempest usher in the dreaded morn,
Upon his dungeon walls the lightning play,
The thunder seems to summon him away,
The warder at the door his key applies,
Shoots back the bolt, and all his courage dies:
If then, just then, all thoughts of mercy lost,
When hope, long lingering, at last yields the ghost,
The sound of pardon pierce his startled ear,
He drops at once his fetters and his fear;
A transport glows in all he looks and speaks,
And the first thankful tears bedew his cheeks.
Joy, far superior joy, that much outweighs
The comfort of a few poor added days,
Invades, possesses, and o'erwhelms the soul
Of him, whom Hope has with a touch made whole.
'Tis Heaven, all Heaven descending on the wings
Of the glad legions of the King of kings;
'Tis more—'tis God diffused through every part,
'Tis God himself triumphant in his heart.
O welcome now the sun's once hated light,
His noonday beams were never half so bright.
Not kindred minds alone are called t' employ
Their hours, their days, in listening to his joy;
Unconscious nature, all that he surveys,
Rocks, groves, and streams, must join him in his praise.

These are thy glorious works, eternal Truth,
The scoff of withered age and beardless youth;
These move the censure and illiberal grin
Of fools, that hate thee and delight in sin:
But these shall last when night has quenched the pole,
And Heaven is all departed as a scroll;
And when, as Justice has long since decreed,
This earth shall blaze, and a new world succeed,
Then these thy glorious works, and they who share
That hope which can alone exclude despair,
Shall live exempt from weakness and decay,
The brightest wonders of an endless day.

Happy the bard, (if that fair name belong
To him, that blends no fable with his song,)
Whose lines uniting, by an honest art,
The faithful monitor's and poet's part,
Seek to delight, that they may mend mankind,
And, while they captivate, inform the mind:
Still happier, if he till a thankful soil,
And fruit reward his honourable toil:
But happier far, who comfort those, that wait
To hear plain truth at Judah's hallowed gate:
Their language simple, as their manners meek,
No shining ornaments have they to seek;
Nor labour they, nor time nor talents waste,
In sorting flowers to suit a fickle taste;
But while they speak the wisdom of the skies,
Which art can only darken and disguise,
Th' abundant harvest, recompense divine,
Repays their work—the gleaning only mine.

Charity.

Quo nihil majus meliusve terris
Fata donavere, bonique divi:
Nec dabunt, quamvis redeant in aurum
Tempora priscum. *Hor.* Lib. iv. Ode 2.

Fairest and foremost of the train, that wait
On man's most dignified and happiest state,
Whether we name thee charity or love,
Chief grace below, and all in all above,
Prosper (I press thee with a powerful plea)
A task I venture on, impelled by thee;
O never seen but in thy blest effects,
Or felt but in the soul that heaven selects;
Who seeks to praise thee, and to make thee known
To other hearts, must have thee in his own.
Come, prompt me with benevolent desires,
Teach me to kindle at thy gentle fires,
And, though disgraced and slighted, to redeem
A poet's name, by making thee the theme.
God, working ever on a social plan,
By various ties attaches man to man:
He made at first, though free and unconfined,
One man the common father of the kind;
That every tribe, though placed as he sees best
Where seas or deserts part them from the rest
Differing in language, manners, or in face,
Might feel themselves allied to all the race.
When Cook—lamented, and with tears as just
As ever mingled with heroic dust,—
Steered Britain's oak into a world unknown,
And in his country's glory sought his own,
Wherever he found man, to nature true,
The rights of man were sacred in his view;
He soothed with gifts, and greeted with a smile,
The simple native of the new-found isle;
He spurned the wretch, that slighted or withstood
The tender argument of kindred blood,

Nor would endure, that any should control
His freeborn brethren of the southern pole.
But though some nobler minds a law respect,
That none shall with impunity neglect,
In baser souls unnumbered evils meet,
To thwart its influence, and its end defeat.
While Cook is loved for savage lives he saved,
See Cortez odious for a world enslaved!
Where wast thou then, sweet Charity? where then,
Thou tutelary friend of helpless men?
Wast thou in monkish cells and nunneries found,
Or building hospitals on English ground?
No.—Mammon makes the world his legatee
Through fear, not love; and Heaven abhors the fee,
Wherever found, (and all men need thy care,)
Nor age nor infancy could find thee there.
The hand, that slew till it could slay no more,
Was glued to the sword hilt with Indian gore.
Their prince, as justly seated on his throne
As vain imperial Philip on his own.
Tricked out of all his royalty by art,
That stripped him bare, and broke his honest heart,
Died by the sentence of a shaven priest,
For scorning what they taught him to detest.
How dark the veil, that intercepts the blaze
Of Heaven's mysterious purposes and ways;
God stood not, though he seemed to stand, aloof;
And at this hour the conqueror feels the proof:
The wreath he won drew down an instant curse,
The fretting plague is in the public purse,
The cankered spoil corrodes the pining state,
Starved by that indolence their mines create.
O could their ancient Incas rise again,
How would they take up Israel's taunting strain?
Art thou too fallen, Iberia? Do we see
The robber and the murderer weak as we?
Thou, that hast wasted earth, and dared despise
Alike the wrath and mercy of the skies,
Thy pomp is in the grave, thy glory laid
Low in the pits thine avarice has made.
We come with joy from our eternal rest,
To see the oppressor in his turn oppressed.
Art thou the god, the thunder of whose hand
Rolled over all our desolated land,
Shook principalities and kingdoms down,
And made the mountains tremble at his frown!
The sword shall light upon thy boasted powers,
And waste them, as thy sword has wasted ours.
'Tis thus Omnipotence his law fulfils,
And Vengeance executes what Justice wills.
Again—the band of commerce was designed
T' associate all the branches of mankind;
And if a boundless plenty be the robe,
Trade is the golden girdle of the globe.
Wise to promote whatever end he means,
God opens fruitful nature's various scenes:
Each climate needs what other climes produce,
And offers something to the general use;
No land but listens to the common call,
And in return receives supply from all.
This genial intercourse, and mutual aid,
Cheers what were else a universal shade,
Calls Nature from her ivy-mantled den,
And softens human rock-work into men
Ingenious Art, with her expressive face,
Steps forth to fashion and refine the race;
Not only fills Necessity's demand,
But overcharges her capacious hand:
Capricious Taste itself can crave no more,
Than she supplies from her abounding store;
She strikes out all that luxury can ask,
And gains new vigour at her endless task.
Hers is the spacious arch, the shapely spire,
The painter's pencil, and the poet's lyre;
From her the canvass borrows light and shade,
And verse, more lasting, hues that never fade.
She guides the fingers o'er the dancing keys,
Gives difficulty all the grace of ease,
And pours a torrent of sweet notes around,
Fast as the thirsting ear can drink the sound.

These are the gifts of Art, and Art thrives most
Where commerce has enriched the busy coast;
He catches all improvements in his flight,
Spreads foreign wonders in his country's sight,
Imports what others have invented well,
And stirs his own to match them, or excel.
'Tis thus reciprocating, each with each,
Alternately the nations learn and teach;
While Providence enjoins to every soul
A union with the vast terraqueous whole.

Heaven speed the canvass, gallantly unfurled
To furnish and accommodate a world,
To give the pole the produce of the sun,
And knit th' unsocial climates into one.—
Soft airs and gentle heavings of the wave
Impel the fleet, whose errand is to save,
To succour wasted regions, and replace
The smile of Opulence in Sorrow's face.
Let nothing adverse, nothing unforeseen,
Impede the bark, that ploughs the deep serene.
Charged with a freight transcending in its worth
The gems of India, Nature's rarest birth,
That flies, like Gabriel on his Lord's commands,
A herald of God's love to pagan lands.
But ah! what wish can prosper, or what prayer,
For merchants rich in cargoes of despair,
Who drive a loathsome traffic, guage, and span,
And buy the muscles and the bones of man!
The tender ties of father, husband, friend,
All bonds of nature in that moment end;
And each endures, while yet he draws his breath,
A stroke as fatal as the scythe of Death.
The sable warrior, frantic with regret
Of her he loves, and never can forget,
Loses in tears the far-receding shore,
But not the thought, that they must meet no more;

Deprived of her and freedom at a blow,
What has he left that he can yet forego?
Yes, to deep sadness sullenly resigned,
He feels his body's bondage in his mind;
Puts off his generous nature; and, to suit
His manners with his fate, puts on the brute.
O most degrading of all ills, that wait
On man, a mourner in his best estate!
All other sorrows Virtue may endure,
And find submission more than half a cure;
Grief is itself a medicine, and bestowed
T' improve the fortitude that bears the load,
To teach the wanderer, as his woes increase,
The path of Wisdom, all whose paths are peace;
But slavery!—Virtue dreads it as her grave:
Patience itself is meanness in a slave:
Or if the will and sovereignty of God
Did suffer it a while, and kiss the rod,
Wait for the dawning of a brighter day,
And snap the chain the moment when you may.
Nature imprints upon whate'er we see,
That has a heart and life in it, Be free;
The beasts are chartered—neither age nor force
Can quell the love of freedom in a horse:
He breaks the cord that held him at the rack;
And, conscious of an unencumbered back,
Snuffs up the morning air, forgets the rein;
Loose fly his forelock and his ample mane.
Responsive to the distant neigh he neighs;
Nor stops till, overleaping all delays,
He finds the pasture where his fellows graze.
Canst thou, and honoured with a Christian name,
Buy what is woman-born, and feel no shame;
Trade in the blood of innocence, and plead
Expedience as a warrant for the deed?
So may the wolf, whom famine has made bold,
To quit the forest and invade the fold:
So may the ruffian, who, with ghostly glide,
Dagger in hand, steals close to your bed side;
Not he, but his emergence forced the door,
He found it inconvenient to be poor.
Has God then given its sweetness to the cane,
Unless his laws be trampled on—in vain?
Built a brave world, which can not yet subsist,
Unless his right to rule it be dismissed?
Impudent blasphemy! So Folly pleads,
And, Avarice being judge, with ease succeeds.
But grant the plea, and let it stand for just,
That man make man his prey, because he *must*;
Still there is room for pity to abate,
And sooth the sorrows of so sad a state.
A Briton knows, or if he knows it not,
The Scripture placed within his reach, he ought,
That souls have no discriminating hue,
Alike important in their Maker's view;
That none are free from blemish since the fall,
And Love divine has paid one price for all.
The wretch, that works and weeps without relief,
Has one that notices his silent grief.
He, from whose hands alone all power proceeds,
Ranks its abuse among the foulest deeds,
Considers *all* injustice with a frown;
But *marks* the man that treads his fellow down.
Begone—the whip and bell in that hard hand
Are hateful ensigns of usurped command.
Not Mexico could purchase kings a claim
To scourge him, weariness his only blame.
Remember Heaven has an avenging rod:
To smite the poor is treason against God.
Trouble is grudgingly and hardly brooked,
While life's sublimest joys are overlooked
We wander o'er a sunburnt thirsty soil,
Murmuring and weary of our daily toil,
Forget t' enjoy the palm-tree's offered shade,
Or taste the fountain in the neighbouring glade:
Else who would lose, that had the power t' improve,
The occasion of transmuting fear to love?
O 'tis a god-like privilege to save,
And that scorns it is himself a slave.
Inform his mind; one flash of heavenly day
Would heal his heart, and melt his chains away.
"Beauty for ashes" is a gift indeed,
And slaves, by truth enlarged, are doubly freed.
Then would he say, submissive at thy feet,
While gratitude and love made service sweet,—
My dear deliverer out of hopeless night,
Whose bounty bought me but to give me light,
I was a bondman on my native plain,
Sin forged, and Ignorance made fast, the chain;
Thy lips have shed instruction as the dew,
Taught me what path to shun, and what pursue;
Farewell my former joys! I sigh no more
For Africa's once loved, benighted shore;
Serving a benefactor I am free;
At my best home, if not exiled from thee.
Some men make gain a fountain, whence proceeds
A stream of liberal and heroic deeds;
The swell of pity, not to be confined
Within the scanty limits of the mind,
Disdains the bank, and throws the golden sands,
A rich deposite, on the bordering lands:
These have an ear for his paternal call,
Who makes some rich for the supply of all;
God's gift with pleasure in his praise employ;
And *Thornton* is familiar with the joy.
O could I worship aught beneath the skies,
That earth has seen, or fancy can devise,
Thine altar, sacred Liberty, should stand,
Built by no mercenary vulgar hand,
With fragrant turf, and flowers as wild and fair
As ever dressed a bank, or scented summer air.
Duly, as ever on the mountain's height
The peep of Morning shed a dawning light,

Again, when Evening, in her sober vest,
Drew the gray curtain of the fading west,
My soul should yield thee willing thanks and praise,
For the chief blessings of my fairest days:
But that were sacrilege—praise is not thine,
But his who gave thee, and preserves thee mine;
Else I would say, and as I spake bid fly
A captive bird into the boundless sky,
This triple realm adores thee—thou art come
From Sparta hither, and art here at home.
We feel thy force still active, at this hour
Enjoy immunity from priestly power,
While Conscience, happier than in ancient years,
Owns no superior but the God she fears.
Propitious spirit! yet expunge a wrong
Thy rights have suffered, and our land, too long.
Teach mercy to ten thousand hearts, that share
The fears and hopes of a commercial care.
Prisons expect the wicked, and were built
To bind the lawless, and to punish guilt;
But shipwreck, earthquake, battle, fire, and flood,
Are mighty mischiefs, not to be withstood;
And honest merit stands on slippery ground,
Where covert guile and artifice abound.
Let just restraint, for public peace designed,
Chain up the wolves and tigers of mankind;
The foe of virtue has no claim to thee,
But let insolvent Innocence go free.

Patron of else the most despised of men,
Accept the tribute of a stranger's pen;
Verse, like the laurel; its immortal meed,
Should be the guerdon of a noble deed;
I may alarm thee, but I fear the shame
(Charity chosen as my theme and aim)
I must incur, forgetting *Howard's* name.
Blest with all wealth can give thee, to resign
Joys doubly sweet to feelings quick as thine,
To quit the bliss thy rural scenes bestow,
To seek a nobler amidst scenes of wo,
To traverse seas, range kingdoms, and bring home,
Not the proud monuments of Greece or Rome,
But knowledge such as only dungeons teach,
And only sympathy like thine could reach;
That grief sequestered from the public stage,
Might smooth her feathers, and enjoy her cage;
Speaks a divine ambition, and a zeal,
The boldest patriot might be proud to feel.
O that the voice of clamour and debate,
That pleads for peace till it disturbs the state,
Were hushed in favour of thy generous plea,
The poor thy clients, and Heaven's smile thy fee?
Philosophy, that does not dream or stray,
Walks arm in arm with nature all his way;
Compasses earth, dives into it, ascends
Whatever steep Inquiry recommends,
Sees planetary wonders smoothly roll
Round other systems under her control,
Drinks wisdom at the milky stream of light,
That cheers the silent journey of the night,
And brings at his return a bosom charged
With rich instruction, and a soul enlarged.
The treasured sweets of the capacious plan,
That Heaven spreads wide before the view of man,
All prompt his pleased pursuit, and to pursue
Still prompt him, with a pleasure always new;
He too has a connecting power, and draws
Man to the centre of the common cause,
Aiding a dubious and deficient sight
With a new medium and a purer light.
All truth is precious, if not all divine;
And what dilates the powers must needs refine.
He reads the skies, and, watching every change,
Provides the faculties an ampler range;
And wins mankind, as his attempts prevail,
A prouder station on the general scale.
But Reason still, unless divinely taught,
Whate'er she learns, learns nothing as she ought;
The lamp of revelation only shows,
What human wisdom can not but oppose,
That man, in nature's richest mantle clad
And graced with all philosophy can add,
Though fair without and luminous within,
Is still the progeny and heir of sin.
Thus taught, down falls the plumage of his pride;
He feels his need of an unerring guide,
And knows that falling he shall rise no more,
Unless the power that bade him stand restore.
This is indeed philosophy; this known
Makes wisdom, worthy of the name, his own;
And, without this, whatever he discuss;
Whether the space between the stars and us;
Whether he measure earth, compute the sea;
Weigh sunbeams, carve a fly, or spit a flea;
The solemn trifler with his boasted skill
Toils much, and is a solemn trifler still:
Blind was he born, and his misguided eyes
Grown dim in trifling studies, blind he dies.
Self-knowledge truly learned of course implies
The rich possession of a nobler prize;
For self to self, and God to man revealed,
(Two themes to Nature's eye for ever sealed)
Are taught by rays, that fly with equal pace
From the same centre of enlightening grace.
Here stay thy foot; how copious, and how clear,
Th' o'erflowing well of Charity springs here!
Hark! 'tis the music of a thousand rills,
Some through the groves, some down the sloping hills,
Winding a secret or an open course,
And all supplied from an eternal source.
The ties of Nature do but feebly bind,
And Commerce partially reclaims mankind;
Philosophy, without his heavenly guide,
May blow up self-conceit, and nourish pride
But, while his promise is the reasoning part,
Has still a veil of midnight on his heart.

'Tis Truth divine, exhibited on earth,
Gives Charity her being and her birth.
Suppose (when thought is warm and fancy flows,
What will not argument sometimes suppose?
An isle possessed by creatures of our kind,
Endued with reason, yet by nature blind,
Let supposition lend her aid once more,
And land some grave optician on the shore:
He claps his lens, if haply they may see,
Close to the part where vision ought to be;
But finds, that, though his tubes assist the sight,
They can not give it, or make darkness light.
He reads wise lectures, and describes aloud
A sense they know not, to the wondering crowd;
He talks of light, and the prismatic hues,
As men of depth in erudition use;
But all he gains for his harangue is—Well,——
What monstrous lies some travellers will tell!
The soul, whose sight all-quickening grace renews,
Takes the resemblance of the good she views,
As diamonds, stripped of their opaque disguise,
Reflect the noonday glory of the skies.
She speaks of him, her author, guardian, friend,
Whose love knew no beginning, knows no end,
In language warm as all that love inspires,
And in the glow of her intense desires,
Pants to communicate her noble fires.
She sees a world stark blind to what employs
Her eager thought, and feeds her flowing joys;
Though Wisdom hail them, heedless of her call,
Flies to save some, and feels a pang for all:
Herself as weak as her support is strong,
She feels that frailty she denied so long;
And, from a knowledge of her own disease,
Learns to compassionate the sick she sees.
Here see, acquitted of all vain pretence,
The reign of genuine Charity commence.
Though scorn repay her sympathetic tears,
She still is kind, and still she perseveres;
The truth she loves a sightless world blaspheme,
'Tis childish dotage, a delirious dream;
The danger they discern not, they deny;
Laugh at their only remedy, and die.
But still a soul thus touched can never cease,
Whoever threatens war, to speak of peace.
Pure in her aim, and in her temper mild,
Her wisdom seems the weakness of a child:
She makes excuses where she might condemn,
Reviled by those that hate her, prays for them:
Suspicion lurks not in her artless breast,
The worst suggested, she believes the best;
Not soon provoked, however stung and teased,
And, if perhaps made angry, soon appeased;
She rather waives than will dispute her right,
And, injured, makes forgiveness her delight.
Such was the portrait an apostle drew,
The bright original was one he knew;
Heaven held his hand, the likeness must be true.

When one, that holds communion with the skies,
Has filled his urn where these pure waters rise,
And once more mingles with us meaner thing
'Tis e'en as if an angel shook his wings;
Immortal fragrance fills the circuit wide,
That tells us whence his treasures are supplied.
So when a ship, well freighted with the stores
The sun matures on India's spicy shores,
Has dropped her anchor, and her canvass furled,
In some safe haven of our western world,
'Twere vain inquiry to what port she went
The gale informs us, laden with the scent.
Some seek, when queasy conscience has its qualms,
To lull the painful malady with alms;
But charity not feigned intends alone
Another's good—theirs centres in their own;
And, too short lived to reach the realms of peace,
Must cease for ever when the poor shall cease.
Flavia, most tender of her own good name,
Is rather careless of her sister's fame:
Her superfluity the poor supplies,
But, if she touch a character, it dies.
The seeming virtue weighed against the vice,
She deems all safe, for she has paid the price:
No charity but alms aught values she,
Except in porcelain on her mantel-tree.
How many deeds, with which the world has rung
From Pride, in league with Ignorance, have sprung
But God o'errules all human follies still,
And bends the tough materials to his will.
A conflagration, or a wintry flood,
Has left some hundreds without home or food;
Extravagance and Avarice shall subscribe,
While fame and self-complacence are the bribe.
The brief proclaimed, it visits every pew,
But first the squire's, a compliment but due:
With slow deliberation he unties
His glittering purse, that envy of all eyes,
And, while the clerk just puzzles out the psalm,
Slides guinea behind guinea in his palm;
Till finding, what he might have found before,
A smaller piece amidst the precious store,
Pinched close between his finger and his thumb,
He half exhibits, and then drops the sum.
Gold to be sure!—Throughout the town 'tis told,
How the good squire gives never less than gold,
From motives such as his, though not the best,
Springs in due time supply for the distressed;
Not less effectual than what love bestows,
Except that office clips it as it goes.
But lest I seem to sin against a friend,
And wound the grace I mean to recommend,
(Though vice derided with a just design
Implies no trespass against love divine,)
Once more I would adopt the graver style,
A teacher should be sparing of his smile.
Unless a love of virtue light the flame,
Satire is, more than those he brands, to blame;

He hides behind a magisterial air
His own offences, and strips others bare;
Affects, indeed, a most humane concern,
That men, if gently tutored, will not learn;
That mulish Folly, not to be reclaimed
By softer methods, must be made ashamed;
But (I might instance in St. Patrick's dean)
Too often rails to gratify his spleen.
Most satirists are indeed a public scourge;
Their mildest physic is a farrier's purge;
Their acrid temper turns, as soon as stirred,
The milk of their good purpose all to curd.
Their zeal begotten, as their works rehearse,
By lean despair upon an empty purse,
The wild assassins start into the street,
Prepared to poniard whomsoe'er they meet.
No skill in swordmanship, however just,
Can be secure against a madman's thrust;
And even Virtue, so unfairly matched,
Although immortal, may be pricked or scratched.
When scandal has new minted an old lie,
Or taxed invention for a fresh supply,
'Tis called a satire, and the world appears
Gathering around it with erected ears:
A thousand names are tossed into the crowd;
Some whispered softly, and some twanged aloud;
Just as the sapience of an author's brain
Suggests it safe or dangerous to be plain.
Strange! how the frequent interjected dash
Quickens a market and helps off the trash;
The important letters, that include the rest,
Serve as a key to those that are suppressed;
Conjecture gripes the victims in his paw,
The world is charmed, and Scrib escapes the law.
So, when the cold damp shades of night prevail,
Worms may be caught by either head or tail;
Forcibly drawn from many a close recess,
They meet with little pity, no redress;
Plunged in the stream, they lodge upon the mud,
Food for the famished rovers of the flood.

All zeal for a reform, that gives offence
To peace and charity, is mere pretence:
A bold remark, but which, if well applied,
Would humble many a towering poet's pride.
Perhaps the man was in a sportive fit,
And had no other play-place for his wit;
Perhaps enchanted with the love of fame,
He sought the jewel in his neighbour's shame;
Perhaps—whatever end he might pursue,
The cause of virtue could not be his view.
At every stroke wit flashes in our eyes;
The turns are quick, the polished points surprise,
But shine with cruel and tremendous charms,
That, while they please, possess us with alarms;
So have I seen (and hastened to the sight
On all the wings of holiday delight,)
Where stands that monument of ancient power,
Named, with emphatic dignity, the Tower,
Guns, halberts, swords, and pistols, great and small,
In starry forms disposed upon the wall;
We wonder, as we gazing stand below,
That brass and steel should make so fine a show;
But though we praise th' exact designer's skill,
Account them implements of mischief still.
No works shall find acceptance in that day,
When all disguises shall be rent away,
That square not truly with the Scripture plan,
Nor spring from love to God, or love to man.
As he ordains things sordid in their birth
To be resolved into their parent earth;
And, though the soul shall seek superior orbs,
Whate'er this world produces, it absorbs;
So self starts nothing, but what tends apace
Home to the goal, where it began the race.
Such as our motive is, our aim must be;
If this be servile, that can ne'er be free:
If self employ us, whatsoe'er is wrought,
We glorify that self, not him we ought:
Such virtues had need prove their own reward,
The Judge of all men owes them no regard.
True Charity, a plant divinely nursed,
Fed by the love from which it rose at first,
Thrives against hope, and, in the rudest scene,
Storms but enliven its unfading green:
Exuberant is the shadow it supplies,
Its fruits on earth, its growth above the skies.
To look at Him, who formed us and redeemed,
So glorious now, though once so disesteemed,
To see a God stretch forth his human hand,
T' uphold the boundless scenes of his command·
To recollect, that, in a form like ours,
He bruised beneath his feet th' infernal powers,
Captivity led captive, rose to claim
The wreath he won so dearly in our name;
That, throned above all height, he condescends
To call the few that trust in him his friends;
That, in the Heaven of heavens, that space he deems
Too scanty for th' exertion of his beams,
And shines as if impatient to bestow
Life and a kingdom upon worms below;
That sight imparts a never-dying flame,
Though feeble in degree, in kind the same.
Like him the soul, thus kindled from above,
Spreads wide her arms of universal love;
And, still enlarged as she receives the grace,
Includes creation in her close embrace.
Behold a Christian! and without the fires
The founder of that name alone inspires,
Though all accomplishment, all knowledge meet,
To make the shining prodigy complete,
Whoever boasts that name—behold a cheat!
Were love, in these the world's last doting years,
As frequent as the want of it appears,
The churches warmed, they would no longer hold
Such frozen figures, stiff as they are cold;

Relenting forms would lose their power or cease;
And e'en the dipped and sprinkled live in peace:
Each heart would quit its prison in the breast,
And flow in free communion with the rest.
The statesman, skilled in projects dark and deep,
Might burn his useless Machiavel, and sleep;
His budget often filled, yet always poor,
Might swing at ease behind his study door,
No longer prey upon our annual rents,
Or scare the nation with its big contents:
Disbanded legions freely might depart,
And slaying man would cease to be an art.
No learned disputants would take the field,
Sure not to conquer, and sure not to yield;
Both sides deceived, if rightly understood,
Pelting each other for the public good.
Did Charity prevail, the press would prove
A vehicle of virtue, truth, and love;
And I might spare myself the pains to show
What few can learn, and all suppose they know.
Thus I have sought to grace a serious lay
With many a wild, indeed, but flowery spray,
In hopes to gain, what else I must have lost,
Th' attention pleasure has so much engrossed.
But if, unhappily deceived, I dream,
And prove too weak for so divine a theme,
Let Charity forgive me a mistake,
That zeal, not vanity, has chanced to make,
And spare the poet for his subject's sake.

Conversation.

Nam neque me tantum venientis sibilus austri,
Nec percussa juvant fluctu tam litora, nec quæ
Saxosas inter decurrunt flumina valles. *Virg.* Ecl. 5.

Though Nature weigh our talents, and dispense
To every man his modicum of sense,
And conversation in its better part
May be esteemed a gift, and not an art,
Yet much depends, as in the tiller's toil,
On culture, and the sowing of the soil.
Words learned by rote a parrot may rehearse,
But talking is not always to converse;
Not more distinct from harmony divine,
The constant creaking of a country sign.
As alphabets in ivory employ,
Hour after hour, the yet unlettered boy,
Sorting and puzzling with a deal of glee
Those seeds of science called his A B C;
So language in the mouths of the adult,
Witness its insignificant result,
Too often proves an implement of play,
A toy to sport with, and pass time away.
Collect at evening what the day brought forth,
Compress the sum into its solid worth,
And if it weigh th' importance of a fly,
The scales are false, or algebra a lie,
Sacred interpreter of human thought,
How few respect or use thee as they ought!
But all shall give account of every wrong,
Who dare dishonour or defile the tongue;
Who prostitute it in the cause of vice,
Or sell the glory at the market-price;
Who vote for hire, or point it with lampoon,
The dear-bought placeman, and the cheap buffoon.
There is a prurience in the speech of some,
Wrath stays him, or else God would strike them dumb:
His wise forbearance has their end in view,
They fill their measure, and receive their due.
The heathen law-givers of ancient days,
Names almost worthy of a Christian's praise,
Would drive them forth from the resort of men,
And shut up every satyr in his den.
O come not ye near innocence and truth,
Ye worms that eat into the bud of youth!
Infectious as impure, your blighting power
Taints in its rudiments the promised flower,
Its odour perished and its charming hue,
Thenceforth 'tis hateful, for it smells of you.
Not e'en the vigorous and headlong rage
Of adolescence, or a firmer age,
Affords a plea allowable or just
For making speech the pamperer of lust;
But when the breath of age commits the fault,
'Tis nauseous as the vapour of a vault.
So withered stumps disgrace the sylvan scene,
No longer fruitful, and no longer green;
The sapless wood, divested of the bark,
Grows fungous, and takes fire at every spark.

Oaths terminate, as Paul observes, all strife—
Some men have surely then a peaceful life;
Whatever subject occupy discourse,
The feats of Vestris, or the naval force,
Asseveration blustering in your face
Makes contradiction such a hopeless case:
In every tale they tell, or false or true,
Well known, or such as no man ever knew,
They fix attention, heedless of your pain,
With oaths like rivets forced into the brain;
And e'en when sober truth prevails throughout,
They swear it, till affirmance breeds a doubt.
A Persian, humble servant of the sun,
Who, though devout, yet bigotry had none,

Hearing a lawyer, grave in his address,
With abjuration every word impress,
Supposed the man a bishop, or, at least,
God's name so much upon his lips, a priest;
Bowed at the close with all his graceful airs,
And begged an interest in his frequent prayers.
Go, quit the rank to which ye stood preferred,
Henceforth associate in one common herd;
Religion, virtue, reason, common sense,
Pronounce your human form a false pretence;
A mere disguise, in which a devil lurks,
Who yet betrays his secret by his works.
Ye powers who rule the tongue, if such there are,
And make colloquial happiness your care,
Preserve me from the thing I dread and hate,
A duel in the form of a debate.
The clash of arguments and jar of words,
Worse than the mortal brunt of rival swords,
Decide no question with their tedious length,
For opposition, gives opinion strength.
Divert the champions prodigal of breath;
And put the peaceably-disposed to death.
O thwart me not, sir Soph, at every turn,
Nor carp at every flaw you may discern;
Though syllogisms hang not on my tongue,
I am not surely always in the wrong;
'Tis hard if all is false that I advance,
A fool must now and then be right by chance.
Not that all freedom of dissent I blame;
No—there I grant the privilege I claim.
A disputable point is no man's ground;
Rove where you please, 'tis common all around.
Discourse may want an animated—No,
To brush the surface, and to make it flow;
But still remember, if you mean to please,
To press your point with modesty and ease.
The mark, at which my juster aim I take,
Is contradiction for its own dear sake.
Set your opinion at whatever pitch,
Knots and impediments make something hitch;
Adopt his own, 'tis equally in vain,
Your thread of argument is snapped again;
The wrangler, rather than accord with you,
Will judge himself deceived, and prove it too.
Vociferated logic kills me quite,
A noisy man is always in the right:
I twirl my thumbs, fall back into my chair,
Fix on the wainscot a distressful stare,
And, when I hope his blunders are all out,
Reply discreetly—To be sure—no doubt!
Dubius is such a scrupulous good man—
Yes—you may catch him tripping if you can.
He would not, with a peremptory tone,
Assert the nose upon his face his own;
With hesitation admirably slow,
He humbly hopes—presumes—it may be so.
His evidence, if he were called by law
To swear to some enormity he saw,
For want of prominence and just relief
Would hang an honest man, and save a thief.
Through constant dread of giving truth offence,
He ties up all his hearers in suspense;
Knows what he knows, as if he knew it not;
What he remembers, seems to have forgot;
His sole opinion, whatsoe'er befall,
Centering at last in having none at all.
Yet, though he tease and baulk your listening ear,
He makes one useful point exceeding clear;
Howe'er ingenious on his darling theme
A sceptic in philosophy may seem,
Reduced to practice, his beloved rule
Would only prove him a consummate fool;
Useless in him alike both brain and speech,
Fate having placed all truth above his reach,
His ambiguities his total sum,
He might as well be blind, and deaf, and dumb.
Where men of judgment creep and feel their way,
The positive pronounce without dismay;
Their want of light and intellect supplied
By sparks absurdity strikes out of pride.
Without the means of knowing right from wrong,
They always are decisive, clear, and strong;
Where others toil with philosophic force,
Their nimble nonsense takes a shorter course;
Flings at your head conviction in the lump,
And gains remote conclusions at a jump:
Their own defect, invisible to them,
Seen in another, they at once condemn;
And, though self-idolized in every case,
Hate their own likeness in a brother's face.
The cause is plain, and not to be denied,
The proud are always most provoked by pride;
Few competitions but engender spite;
And those the most where neither has a right.
The point of honour has been deemed of use,
To teach good manners, and to curb abuse;
Admit it true, the consequence is clear,
Our polished manners are a mask we wear,
And at the bottom barbarous still and rude,
We are restrained, indeed, but not subdued.
The very remedy, however sure,
Springs from the mischief it intends to cure,
And savage in its principle appears,
Tried, as it should be, by the fruit it bears.
'Tis hard, indeed, if nothing will defend
Mankind from quarrels but their fatal end;
That now and then a hero must decease,
That the surviving world may live in peace.
Perhaps at last close scrutiny may show
The practice dastardly, and mean, and low;
That men engage in it compelled by force,
And fear, not courage, is its proper source;
The fear of tyrant custom, and the fear
Lest fops should censure us, and fools should sneer.
At least, to trample on our Maker's laws,
And hazard life for any or no cause,

To rush into a fixed eternal state
Out of the very flames of rage and hate,
Or send another shivering to the bar
With all the guilt of such unnatural war,
Whatever use may urge, or honour plead,
On reason's verdict is a madman's deed.
Am I to set my life upon a throw,
Because a bear is rude and surly? No—
A moral, sensible and well-bred man
Will not affront me; and no other can.
Were I empowered to regulate the lists,
They should encounter with well-loaded fists;
A Trojan combat would be something new,
Let *Dares* beat *Entellus* black and blue;
Then each might show, to his admiring friends,
In honourable bumps his rich amends,
And carry in contusions of his skull,
A satisfactory receipt in full.

A story, in which native humour reigns,
Is often useful, always entertains:
A graver fact, enlisted on your side,
May furnish illustration, well applied;
But sedentary weavers of long tales
Give me the fidgets, and my patience fails.
'Tis the most asinine employ on earth,
'To hear them tell of parentage and birth,
And echo conversations dull and dry,
Embellished with—*He said*, and *So said I.*
At every interview their route the same,
The repetition makes attention lame:
We bustle up with unsuccessful speed,
And in the saddest part cry—*Droll indeed!*
The path of narrative with care pursue,
Still making probability your clew:
On all the vestiges of truth attend,
And let *them* guide you to a decent end.
Of all ambitions man may entertain,
The worst that can invade a sickly brain,
Is that, which angles hourly for surprise,
And baits its hook with prodigies and lies.
Credulous infancy, or age as weak,
Are fittest auditors for such to seek,
Who to please others will themselves disgrace,
Yet please not, but affront you to your face.
A great retailer of this curious ware
Having unloaded and made many stare,
Can this be true?—an arch observer cries,
Yes, (rather moved) I saw it with these eyes;
Sir! I believe it on that ground alone;
I could not, had I seen it with my own.

A tale should be judicious, clear, succinct;
The language plain, and incidents well linked;
'Tell not as new what every body knows,
And, new or old, still hasten to a close;
There, centering in a focus round and neat,
Let all your rays of information meet.
What neither yields us profit nor delight
Is like a nurse's lullaby at night;
Guy Earl of Warwick and fair Eleanore,
Or giant-killing Jack, would please me more.
The pipe, with solemn interposing puff,
Makes half a sentence at a time enough;
The dozing sages drop the drowsy strain,
Then pause, and puff—and speak, and pause again.
Such often, like the tube they so admire,
Important triflers: have more smoke than fire.
Pernicious weed! whose scent the fair annoys,
Unfriendly to society's chief joys,
Thy worst effect is banishing for hours
The sex, whose presence civilizes ours:
Thou art indeed the drug a gardener wants,
To poison vermin that infest his plants;
But are we so to wit and beauty blind,
As to despise the glory of our kind,
And show the softest minds and fairest forms
As little mercy, as the grubs and worms?
They dare not wait the riotous abuse,
Thy thirst-creating steams at length produce.
When wine has given indecent language birth,
And forced the flood-gates of licentious mirth;
For sea-born Venus her attachment shows
Still to that element, from which she rose,
And with a quiet, which no fumes disturb,
Sips meek infusions of a milder herb.
Th' emphatic speaker dearly loves t' oppose
In contact inconvenient, nose to nose,
As if the gnomon on his neighbour's phiz,
Touched with the magnet, had attracted his.
His whispered theme, dilated and at large,
Proves after all a wind-gun's airy charge,
An extract of his diary—no more,
A tasteless journal of the day before.
He walked abroad, o'ertaken in the rain,
Called on a friend, drank tea, stepped home again,
Resumed his purpose, had a world of talk
With one he stumbled on, and lost his walk.
I interrupt him with a sudden bow,
Adieu, dear sir! lest you should lose it now.
I can not talk with civet in the room,
A fine puss-gentleman that's all perfume;
The sight's enough—no need to smell a beau—
Who thrusts his nose into a raree-show?
His odoriferous attempts to please,
Perhaps might prosper with a swarm of bees,
But we that make no honey, though we sting,
Poets, are sometimes apt to maul the thing.
'Tis wrong to bring into a mixed resort,
What makes some sick, and others *a la-mort*
An argument of cogence, we may say,
Why such a one should keep himself away.
A graver coxcomb we may sometimes see
Quite as absurd, though not so light as he;
A shallow brain behind a serious mask,
An oracle within an empty cask,
The solemn fop; significant and budge;
A fool with judges, amongst fools a judge,

He says but little, and that little said
Owes all its weight, like loaded dice, to lead.
His wit invites you by his looks to come,
But when you knock, it never is at home.
'Tis like a parcel sent you by the stage,
Some handsome present, as your hopes presage;
'Tis heavy, bulky, and bids fair to prove
An absent friend's fidelity and love;
But when unpacked, your disappointment groans
To find it stuffed with brickbats, earth, and stones.
Some men employ their health, an ugly trick,
In making known how oft they have been sick,
And give us in recitals of disease
A doctor's trouble, but without the fees;
Relate how many weeks they kept their bed,
How an emetic or cathartic sped;
Nothing is slightly touched, much less forgot,
Nose, ears, and eyes, seem present on the spot.
Now the distemper, spite of draught or pill,
Victorious seemed, and now the doctor's skill;
And now—alas for unforeseen mishaps!
They put on a damp nightcap and relapse;
They thought they must have died, they were so bad;
Their peevish hearers almost wish they had.
Some fretful tempers wince at every touch,
You always do too little or too much:
You speak with life, in hopes to entertain,
Your elevated voice goes through the brain;
You fall at once into a lower key,
That's worse—the drone-pipe of an humblebee.
The southern sash admits too strong a light,
You rise and drop the curtain—now 'tis night.
He shakes with cold—you stir the fire and strive
To make a blaze—that's roasting him alive.
Serve him with venison, and he chooses fish;
With soal—that's just the sort he does not wish.
He takes what he at first professed to loath,
And in due time feeds heartily on both;
Yet still, o'erclouded with a constant frown,
He does not swallow, but he gulps it down.
Your hope to please him vain on every plan,
Himself should work that wonder if he can—
Alas! his efforts double his distress,
He likes yours little, and his own still less.
Thus always teasing others, always teased,
His only pleasure is—to be displeased.
I pity bashful men, who feel the pain
Of fancied scorn and undeserved disdain,
And bear the marks upon a blushing face
Of needless shame, and self-imposed disgrace.
Our sensibilities are so acute,
The fear of being silent makes us mute.
We sometimes think we could a speech produce
Much to the purpose, if our tongues were loose;
But being tried, it dies upon the lip,
Faint as a chicken's note that has the pip:
Our wasted oil unprofitably burns,
Like hidden lamps in old sepulchral urns.

Few Frenchmen of this evil have complained:
It seems as if we Britons were ordained,
By way of wholesome curb upon our pride;
To fear each other, fearing none beside.
The cause perhaps inquiry may descry,
Self-searching with an introverted eye,
Concealed within an unsuspected part,
The vainest corner of our own vain heart;
For ever aiming at the world's esteem,
Our self-importance ruins its own scheme;
In other eyes our talents rarely shown,
Become at length so splendid in our own,
We dare not risk them into public view,
Lest they miscarry of what seems their due.
True modesty is a discerning grace,
And only blushes in the proper place;
But counterfeit is blind, and skulks through fear,
Where 'tis a shame to be ashamed t' appear:
Humility the parent of the first,
The last by vanity produced and nursed.
The circle formed, we sit in silent state,
Like figures drawn upon a dial plate;
Yes ma'am and no ma'am, uttered softly show
Every five minutes how the minutes go;
Each individual suffering a constraint
Poetry may, but colours can not paint;
As if in close committee on the sky,
Reports it hot or cold, or wet or dry;
And finds a changing clime a happy source
Of wise reflection, and well timed discourse.
We next inquire, but softly and by stealth,
Like conservators of the public health,
Of epidemic throats, if such there are,
And coughs, and rheums, and phthisic, and catarrh.
The theme exhausted, a wide chasm ensues,
Filled up at last with interesting news,
Who danced with whom, and who are like to wed,
And who is hanged, and who is brought to bed:
But fear to call a more important cause,
As if 'twere treason against English laws.
The visit paid, with ecstacy we come,
As from a seven years transportation, home,
And there resume an unembarrassed brow,
Recovering what we lost we know not how,
The faculties, that seemed reduced to nought,
Expression and the privilege of thought.

The reeking, roaring hero of the chase,
I give him over as a desperate case.
Physicians write in hopes to work a cure,
Never, if honest ones, when death is sure;
And though the fox he follows may be tamed,
A mere fox-follower never is reclaimed.
Some farrier should prescribe his proper course,
Whose only fit companion is his horse;
Or if, deserving of a better doom,
The noble beast judge otherwise, his groom.
Yet e'en the rogue that serves him, though he stand,
To take his honour's orders, cap in hand,

Prefers his fellow-grooms with much good sense,
Their skill a truth, his master's a pretence.
If neither horse nor groom affect the squire,
Where can at last his jockeyship retire?
O to the club, the scene of savage joys,
The school of coarse good fellowship and noise;
There in the sweet society of those,
Whose friendship from his boyish years he chose,
Let him improve his talent if he can,
Till none but beasts acknowledge him a man.
Man's heart had been impenetrably sealed,
Like theirs that cleave the flood or graze the field,
Had not his Maker's all-bestowing hand
Given him a soul, and bade him understand;
The reasoning power vouchsafed of course inferred
The power to clothe that reason with his word;
For all is perfect, that God works on earth,
And he, that gives conception, aids the birth.
If this be plain, 'tis plainly understood,
What uses of his boon the Giver would.
The Mind, despatched upon her busy toil,
Should range where Providence has blessed the soil;
Visiting every flower with labour meet,
And gathering all her treasures sweet by sweet,
She should imbue the tongue with what she sips,
And shed the balmy blessing on the lips,
That good diffused may more abundant grow,
And speech may praise the power that bids it flow.
Will the sweet warbler of the livelong night,
That fills the listening lover with delight,
Forget his harmony with rapture heard,
To learn the twittering of a meaner bird?
Or make the parrot's mimicry his choice,
That odious libel on a human voice?
No—Nature, unsophisticate by man,
Starts not aside from her Creator's plan;
The melody, that was at first designed
To cheer the rude forefathers of mankind,
Is note for note delivered in our ears,
In the last scene of her six thousand years.
Yet Fashion, leader of a chattering train,
Whom man, for his own hurt, permits to reign,
Who shifts and changes all things but his shape,
And would degrade her votary to an ape,
The fruitful parent of abuse and wrong,
Holds a usurped dominion o'er his tongue;
There sits and prompts him with his own disgrace,
Prescribes the theme, the tone, and the grimace,
And when accomplished in her wayward school,
Calls gentleman whom she has made a fool.
'Tis an unalterable fixed decree,
That none could frame or ratify but she,
That heaven and hell, and righteousness and sin,
Snares in his path, and foes that lurk within,
God and his attributes (a field of day
Where 'tis an angel's happiness to stray,)
Fruits of his love and wonders of his might,
Be never named in ears esteemed polite.
That he who dares, when she forbids, be grave,
Shall stand proscribed, a madman or a knave,
A close designer not to be believed,
Or, if excused that charge, at least deceived.
Oh folly worthy of the nurse's lap,
Give it the breast, or stop its mouth with pap!
Is it incredible, or can it seem
A dream to any, except those that dream,
That man should love his Maker, and *that* fire,
Warming his heart, should at his lips transpire!
Know then, and modestly let fall your eyes,
And veil your daring crest that braves the skies;
That air of insolence affronts your God,
You need his pardon, and provoke his rod:
Now, in a posture that becomes you more
Than that heroic strut assumed before,
Know, your arrears with every hour accrue
For mercy shown, while wrath is justly due.
The time is short, and there are souls on earth,
Though future pain may serve for present mirth,
Acquainted with the woes, that fear or shame,
By fashion taught forbade them once to name,
And, having felt the pangs you deem a jest,
Have proved them truths too big to be expressed.
Go seek on revelation's hallowed ground,
Sure to succeed, the remedy they found:
Touched by that power that you have dared to mock,
That makes seas stable, and dissolves the rock,
Your heart shall yield a life-renewing stream,
That fools, as you have done, shall call a dream.
It happened on a solemn eventide,
Soon after He that was our surety died,
Two bosom friends, each pensively inclined,
The scene of all those sorrows left behind,
Sought their own village, busied as they went
In musings worthy of the great event:
They spake of him they loved, of him whose life,
Though blameless, had incurred perpetual strife,
Whose deeds had left, in spite of hostile arts,
A deep memorial graven on their hearts.
The recollection, like a vein of ore,
The farther traced, enriched them still the more;
They thought him, and they justly thought him, one
Sent to do more than he appeared t'have done;
T' exalt a people, and to place them high
Above all else, and wondered he should die.
Ere yet they brought their journey to an end,
A stranger joined them, courteous as a friend,
And asked them with a kind, engaging air,
What their affliction was, and begged to share.
Informed, he gathered up the broken thread,
And, truth and wisdom gracing all he said,
Explained, illustrated, and searched so well
The tender theme on which they chose to dwell,
That, reaching home, The night, they said, is near,
We must not now be parted, sojourn here-

The new acquaintance soon became a guest,
And, made so welcome at their simple feast,
He blessed the bread, but vanished at the word,
And left them both exclaiming, 'Twas the Lord!
Did not our hearts feel all he deigned to say?
Did they not burn within us on the way?

Now theirs was converse, such as it behoves
Man to maintain, and such as God approves:
Their views, indeed, were indistinct and dim,
But yet successful, being aimed at him,
Christ and his character their only scope,
Their object, and their subject, and their hope,
They felt what it became them much to feel,
And, wanting him to loose the sacred seal,
Found him as prompt, as their desire was true,
To spread the new born glories in their view.

Well—what are ages and the lapse of time,
Matched against truths, as lasting as sublime?
Can length of years on God himself exact?
Or make that fiction, which was once a fact?
No—marble and recording brass decay,
And, like the graver's memory, pass away;
The works of man inherit, as is just,
Their author's frailty, and return to dust:
But truth divine for ever stands secure,
Its head is guarded, and its base is sure.
Fixed in the rolling flood of endless years,
The pillar of th' eternal plan appears,
The raving storm and dashing wave defies,
Built by that architect who built the skies.
Hearts may be found, that harbour at this hour
That love of Christ, and all its quickening power;
And lips unstained by folly or by strife,
Whose wisdom, drawn from the deep well of life,
Tastes of its healthful origin, and flows
A Jordan for th' ablution of our woes.
O days of heaven and nights of equal praise,
Serene and peaceful as those heavenly days,
When souls drawn upwards in communion sweet,
Enjoy the stillness of some close retreat,
Discourse, as if released and safe at home,
Of dangers past, and wonders yet to come,
And spread the sacred treasures of the breast
Upon the lap of covenanted Rest.

What, always dreaming over heavenly things,
Like angel-heads in stone with pigeon-wings?
Canting and whining out all day the word,
And half the night? Fanatic and absurd!
Mine be the friend less frequent in his prayers,
Who makes no bustle with his soul's affairs,
Whose wit can brighten up a wintry day,
And chase the splenetic dull hours away;
Content on earth in earthly things to shine,
Who waits for heaven ere he becomes divine
Leave saints t' enjoy those altitudes they teach,
And plucks the fruit placed more within his reach,

Well spoken, advocate of sin and shame,
Known by thy bleating, Ignorance thy name.
Is sparkling wit the world's exclusive right?
The fixed fee-simple of the vain and light?
Can hopes of heaven, bright prospects for an hour,
That come to waft us out of Sorrow's power,
Obscure or quench a faculty, that finds
Its happiest soil in the serenest minds?
Religion curbs indeed its wanton play,
And brings the trifler under rigorous sway,
But gives it usefulness unknown before,
And, purifying, makes it shine the more.
A Christian's wit is inoffensive light,
A beam that aids, but never grieves the sight;
Vigorous in age as in the flush of youth,
'Tis always active on the side of truth;
Temperance and peace ensure its healthful state,
And make it brightest at its latest date.
Oh I have seen (nor hope perhaps in vain,
Ere life go down, to see such sights again)
A veteran warrior in the Chistian field,
Who never saw the sword he could not wield;
Grave without dullness, learned without pride,
Exact, yet not precise, though meek, keen-eyed;
A man that would have foiled at their own play
A dozen would-be's of the modern day;
Who, when occasion justified its use,
Had wit as bright as ready to produce,
Could fetch from records of an earlier age,
Or from philosophy's enlightened page,
His rich materials, and regale your ear
With strains it was a privilege to hear:
Yet, above all, his luxury supreme,
And his chief glory, was the Gospel theme:
There he was copious as old Greece or Rome,
His happy eloquence seemed there at home,
Ambition not to shine or to excel,
But to treat justly what he loved so well.

It moves me more perhaps than folly ought,
When some green heads, as void of wit as thought,
Suppose *themselves* monopolists of sense,
And wiser men's ability pretence.
Though time will wear us and we must grow old
Such men are not forgot as soon as cold;
Their fragrant memory will outlast their tomb,
Embalmed for ever in its own perfume.
And to say truth, though in its early prime,
And when unstained with any grosser crime,
Youth has a sprightliness and fire to boast,
That in the valley of decline are lost,
And Virtue with peculiar charms appears,
Crowned with the garland of life's blooming years·
Yet Age, by long experience well informed,
Well read, well tempered, with religion warmed,
That fire abated, which impels rash youth,
Proud of his speed, to overshoot the truth,
As time improves the grape's authentic juice,
Mellows and makes the speech more fit for use.
And claims a reverence in its shortening day,
That 'tis an honour and a joy to pay.

The fruits of age, less fair, are yet more sound,
Than those a brighter season pours around;
And, like the stores autumnal suns mature,
Through wintry rigours unimpaired endure.
What is fanatic frenzy, scorned so much,
And dreaded more than a contagious touch?
I grant it dangerous, and approve your fear,
That fire is catching if you draw too near;
But sage observers oft mistake the flame,
And give true piety that odious name.
To tremble (as the creature of an hour
Ought at the view of an almighty power)
Before his presence, at whose awful throne
All tremble in all worlds, except our own,
To supplicate his mercy, love his ways,
And prize them above pleasure, wealth, or praise,
Though common sense, allowed a casting voice,
And free from bias, must approve the choice,
Convicts a man fanatic in th' extreme,
And wild as madness in the world's esteem.
But that disease, when soberly defined,
Is the false fire of an o'erheated mind;
It views the truth with a distorted eye,
And either warps or lays it useless by;
'Tis narrow, selfish, arrogant, and draws
Its sordid nourishment from man's applause;
And while at heart sin unrelinquished lies,
Presumes itself chief favourite of the skies.
'Tis such a light as putrefaction breeds
In fly-blown flesh, whereon the maggot feeds,
Shines in the dark, but, ushered into day,
The stench remains, the lustre dies away.
True bliss, if man may reach it, is composed
Of hearts in union mutually disclosed:
And, farewell else all hopes of pure delight,
Those hearts should be reclaimed, renewed, upright.
Bad men, profaning friendship's hallowed name,
Form, in its stead, a covenant of shame,
A dark confederacy against the laws
Of virtue, and religion's glorious cause:
They build each other up with dreadful skill,
As bastions set point blank against God's will;
Enlarge and fortify the dread redoubt,
Deeply resolved to shut a Saviour out;
Call legions up from hell to back the deed;
And, cursed with conquest, finally succeed.
But souls, that carry on a blest exchange
Of joys, they meet within their heavenly range,
And with a fearless confidence make known
The sorrows sympathy esteems its own,
Daily derive increasing light and force
From such communion in their pleasant course,
Feel less the journey's roughness and its length,
Meet their opposers with united strength,
And, one in heart, in interest, and design,
Gird up each other to the race divine.
But conversation, choose what theme we may,
And chiefly when religion leads the way,
Should flow, like waters after summer showers,
Not as if raised by mere mechanic powers.
The Christian, in whose soul, though now distressed,
Lives the dear thought of joys he once possessed,
When all his glowing language issued forth
With God's deep stamp upon its current worth,
Will speak without disguise, and must impart,
Sad as it is, his undissembling heart,
Abhors constraint, and dares not feign a zeal,
Or seem to boast a fire he does not feel.
The song of Zion is a tasteless thing,
Unless, when rising on a joyful wing,
The soul can mix with the celestial bands,
And give the strain the compass it demands.

Strange tidings these to tell a world, who treat
All but their own experience as deceit!
Will they believe, though credulous enough
To swallow much upon much weaker proof,
That there are blest inhabitants on earth,
Partakers of a new ethereal birth,
Their hopes, desires, and purposes estranged
From things terrestrial, and divinely changed,
Their very language, of a kind, that speaks
The soul's sure interest in the good she seeks,
Who deal with Scripture, its importance felt,
As Tully with philosophy once dealt,
And in the silent watches of the night,
And through the scenes of toil-renewing light,
The social walk, or solitary ride,
Keep still the dear companion at their side!
No—shame upon a self-disgracing age,
God's work may serve an ape upon a stage
With such a jest, as filled with hellish glee
Certain invisibles as shrewd as he;
But veneration or respect finds none,
Save from the subjects of that work alone.
The world grown old her deep discernment shows,
Claps spectacles on her sagacious nose,
Peruses closely the true Christian's face,
And finds it a mere mask of sly grimace:
Usurps God's office, lays his bosom bare,
And finds hypocrisy close lurking there;
And, serving God herself through mere constraint,
Concludes his unfeigned love of him a feint.
And yet, God knows, look human nature through,
(And in due time the world shall know it too)
That since the flowers of Eden felt the blast,
That after man's defection laid all waste,
Sincerity towards the heart-searching God
Has made the new-born creature her abode,
Nor shall be found in unregenerate souls,
Till the last fire burn all between the poles.
Sincerity! why 'tis his only pride,
Weak and imperfect in all grace beside,
He knows that God demands his heart entire,
And gives him all his just demands require.
Without it his pretensions were as vain,
As having it he deems the world's disdain;

That great defect would cost him not alone
Man's favourable judgment, but his own;
His birthright shaken, and no longer clear,
Than while his conduct proves his heart sincere.
Retort the charge, and let the world be told
She boasts a confidence she does not hold;
That, conscious of her crimes, she feels instead
A cold misgiving, and a killing dread:
That while in health the ground of her support
Is madly to forget that life is short;
That sick she trembles, knowing she must die,
Her hope presumption, and her faith a lie;
That while she dotes, and dreams that she believes,
She mocks her Maker, and herself deceives,
Her utmost reach, historical assent,
The doctrines warped to what they never meant;
That truth itself is in her head as dull
And useless as a candle in a scull,
And all her love of God a groundless claim,
A trick upon the canvass, painted flame.
Tell her again, the sneer upon her face,
And all her censures of the work of grace,
Are insincere, meant only to conceal
A dread she would not, yet is forced to feel:
That in her heart the Christian she reveres,
And while she seems to scorn him, only fears.
A poet does not work by square or line,
As smiths and joiners perfect a design;
At least we moderns, our attention less,
Beyond th' example of our sires digress,
And claim a right to scamper and run wide,
Wherever chance, caprice, or fancy guide.
The world and I fortuitously met;
I owed a trifle, and have paid the debt;
She did me wrong, I recompensed the deed,
And, having struck the balance, now proceed.
Perhaps, however, as some years have passed,
Since she and I conversed together last,
And I have lived recluse in rural shades,
Which seldom a distinct report pervades,
Great changes and new manners have occurred,
And blest reforms, that I have never heard,
And she may now be as discreet and wise,
As once absurd in all discerning eyes.
Sobriety perhaps may now be found,
Where once Intoxication pressed the ground;
The subtle and injurious may be just,
And he grown chaste, that was the slave of lust;
Arts once esteemed may be with shame dismissed;
Charity may relax the miser's fist;
The gamester may have cast his cards away,
Forgot to curse, and only kneel to pray.
It has indeed been told me (with what weight,
How credibly, 'tis hard for me to state)
That fables old, that seemed for ever mute,
Revived are hastening into fresh repute,
And gods and goddesses, discarded long,
Like useless lumber, or a stroller's song,
Are bringing into vogue their heathen train,
And Jupiter bids fair to rule again;
That certain feasts are instituted now,
Where Venus hears the lover's tender vow;
That all Olympus through the country roves,
To consecrate our few remaining groves,
And Echo learns politely to repeat
The praise of names for ages obsolete:
That having proved the weakness, it should seem,
Of revelation's ineffectual beam,
To bring the passions under sober sway,
And give the mortal springs their proper play,
They mean to try what may at last be done,
By stout substantial gods of wood and stone,
And whether Roman rites may not produce
The virtues of old Rome for English use.
May such success attend the pious plan,
May Mercury once more embellish man,
Grace him again with long forgotten arts,
Reclaim his taste, and brighten up his parts,
Make him athletic, as in days of old,
Learned at the bar, in the palæstra bold,
Divest the rougher sex of female airs,
And teach the softer not to copy theirs:
The change shall please, nor shall it matter aught
Who works the wonder, if it be but wrought.
'Tis time, however, if the case stand thus,
For us plain folks, and all who side with us,
To build our altar, confident and bold,
And say as stern Elijah said of old,
The strife now stands upon a fair award,
If Israel's Lord be God, then serve the Lord:
If he be silent, faith is all a whim,
Then Baal is the God, and worship him.
Disgression is so much in modern use,
Thought is so rare, and fancy so profuse,
Some never seem so wide of their intent,
As when returning to the theme they meant;
As mendicants, whose business is to roam,
Make every parish but their own their home.
Though such continual zigzags in a book,
Such drunken reelings have an awkward look,
And I had rather creep to what is true,
Than rove and stagger with no mark in view;
Yet to consult a little, seemed no crime,
The freakish humour of the present time;
But now to gather up what seems dispersed,
And touch the subject I designed at first,
May prove, though much beside the rules of art,
Best for the public, and my wisest part.
And first, let no man charge me, that I mean
To clothe in sable every social scene,
And give good company a face severe,
As if they met around a father's bier;
For tell some men, that pleasure all their bent,
And laughter all their work, is life mispent,
Their wisdom bursts into the sage reply,
Then mirth is sin, and we should always cry.

To find the medium asks some share of wit,
And therefore 'tis a mark fools never hit.
But though life's valley be a vale of tears,
A brighter scene beyond that vale appears,
Whose glory, with a light that never fades,
Shoots between scattered rocks and opening shades,
And, while it shows the land the soul desires,
The language of the land she seeks inspires.
Thus touched, the tongue receives a sacred cure
Of all that was absurd, profane, impure;
Held within modest bounds, the tide of speech
Pursues the course that Truth and Nature teach;
No longer labours merely to produce
The pomp of sound, or tinkle without use:
Where'er it winds, the salutary stream,
Sprightly and fresh, enriches every theme,
While all the happy man possessed before,
The gift of nature, or the classic store,
Is made subservient to the grand design,
For which Heaven formed the faculty divine,
So should an idiot, while at large he strays,
Find the sweet lyre, on which an artist plays,
With rash and awkward force the chords he shakes,
And grins with wonder at the jar he makes;
But let the wise and well-instructed hand
Once take the shell beneath his just command,
In gentle sounds it seemed as it complained
Of the rude injuries it late sustained,
Till tuned at length to some immortal song,
It sounds Jehovah's name, and pours his praise
along.

Retirement.

. . . . . studiis florens ignobilis oti.—*Virg. Geor.* Lib. 4.

Hackneyed in business, wearied at the oar
Which thousands, once fast chained to, quit no
more,
But which, when life at ebb runs weak and low,
All wish, or seem to wish, they could forego;
The statesman, lawyer, merchant, man of trade,
Pants for the refuge of some rural shade,
Where, all his long anxieties forgot
Amid the charms of a sequestered spot,
Or recollected only to gild o'er,
And add a smile to what was sweet before,
He may possess the joys he thinks he sees,
Lay his old age upon the lap of Ease,
Improve the remnant of his wasted span,
And, having lived a trifler, die a man.
Thus Conscience pleads her cause within the breast,
Though long rebelled against, not yet suppressed,
And calls a creature formed for God alone,
For Heaven's high purposes, and not his own:
Calls him away from selfish ends and aims,
From what debilitates and what inflames,
From cities humming with a restless crowd,
Sordid as active, ignorant as loud,
Whose highest praise is that they live in vain,
The dupes of pleasure, or the slaves of gain,
Where works of man are clustered close around,
And works of God are hardly to be found,
To regions where, in spite of sin and wo,
Traces of Eden are still seen below,
Where mountain, river, forest, field, and grove,
Remind him of his Maker's power and love.
'Tis well if, looked for at so late a day,
In the last scene of such a senseless play,
True wisdom will attend his feeble call,
And grace his action ere the curtain fall.
Souls, that have long despised their heavenly birth,
Their wishes all impregnated with earth,
For threescore years employed with ceaseless care
In catching smoke and feeding upon air,
Conversant only with the ways of men,
Rarely redeem the short remaining ten.
Inveterate habits choke th' unfruitful heart,
Their fibres penetrate its tenderest part,
And, draining its nutritious powers to feed
Their noxious growth, starve every better seed.
Happy, if full of days—but happier far,
If, ere we yet discern life's evening star,
Sick of the service of a world, that feeds
Its patient drudges with dry chaff and weeds,
We can escape from custom's idiot sway,
To serve the sovereign we were born to obey.
Then sweet to muse upon his skill displayed
(Infinite skill) in all that he has made!
To trace in Nature's most minute design
The signature and stamp of power divine,
Contrivance intricate, expressed with ease,
Where unassisted sight no beauty sees,
The shapely limb and lubricated joint,
Within the small dimensions of a point,
Muscle and nerve miraculously spun,
His mighty work, who speaks, and it is done,
The invisible in things scarce seen revealed,
To whom an atom is an ample field;
To wonder at a thousand insect forms,
These hatched, and those resuscitated worms,
New life ordained and brighter scenes to share,
Once prone on earth, now buoyant upon air,
Whose shape would make them, had they bulk
and size,
More hideous foes than fancy can devise;

With helmet-heads and dragon-scales adorned,
The mighty myriads, now securely scorned,
Would mock the majesty of man's high birth,
Despise his bulwarks, and unpeople earth.
Then with a glance of fancy to survey,
Far as the faculty can stretch away,
Ten thousand rivers poured at his command
From urns, that never fail, through every land;
This like a deluge with impetuous force,
Those winding modestly a silent course;
The cloud-surmounting Alps, the fruitful vales;
Seas, on which every nation spreads her sails;
The sun, a world whence other worlds drink light,
The crescent moon, the diadem of night;
Stars countless, each in his appointed place,
Fast anchored in the deep abyss of space—
At such a sight to catch the poet's flame,
And with a rapture like his own exclaim,
These are thy glorious works, thou source of good,
How dimly seen, how faintly understood!
Thine, and upheld by thy paternal care,
This universal frame, thus wondrous fair;
Thy power divine, and bounty beyond thought,
Adored and praised in all that thou hast wrought.
Absorbed in that immensity I see,
I shrink abased, and yet aspire to thee;
Instruct me, guide me to that heavenly day
Thy words more clearly than thy works display,
That, while thy truths my grosser thoughts refine,
I may resemble thee, and call thee mine.

O blest proficiency! surpassing all
That men erroneously their glory call,
The recompense that arts or arms can yield,
The bar, the senate, or the tented field.
Compared with this sublimest life below,
Ye kings and rulers, what have courts to show?
Thus studied, used and consecrated thus,
On earth what is, seems formed indeed for us:
Not as the plaything of a froward child,
Fretful unless diverted and beguiled,
Much less to feed and fan the fatal fires
Of pride, ambition, or impure desires,
But as a scale, by which the soul ascends
From mighty means to more important ends,
Securely, though by steps but rarely trod,
Mounts from inferior beings up to God,
And sees, by no fallacious light or dim,
Earth made for man, and man himself for him.

Not that I mean t' approve, or would enforce,
A superstitious and monastic course:
Truth is not local, God alike pervades
And fills the world of traffic and the shades,
And may be feared amidst the busiest scenes,
Or scorned were business never intervenes.
But 'tis not easy with a mind like ours,
Conscious of weakness in its noblest powers,
And in a world where, other ills apart,
The roving eye misleads the careless heart,
To limit Thought, by nature prone to stray
Wherever freakish Fancy points the way;
To bid the pleadings of Self-love be still,
Resign our own and seek our Maker's will;
To spread the page of Scripture, and compare
Our conduct with the laws engraven there;
To measure all that passes in the breast,
Faithfully, fairly, by that sacred test;
To dive into the secret deeps within,
To spare no passion and no favourite sin,
And search the themes, important above all,
Ourselves, and our recovery from our fall.
But leisure, silence, and a mind released
From anxious thoughts how wealth may be increased,
How to secure, in some propitious hour,
The point of interest or the post of power,
A soul serene, and equally retired
From objects too much dreaded or desired,
Safe from the clamours of perverse dispute,
At least are friendly to the great pursuit.

Opening the map of God's extensive plan,
We find a little isle, this life of man;
Eternity's unknown expanse appears
Circling around and limiting his years.
The busy race examine and explore
Each creek and cavern of the dangerous shore,
With care collect what in their eyes excels,
Some shining pebbles, and some weeds and shells
Thus laden, dream that they are rich and great,
And happiest he that groans beneath his weight.
The waves o'ertake them in their serious play,
And every hour sweeps multitudes away;
They shriek and sink, survivors start and weep,
Pursue their sport, and follow to the deep.
A few forsake the throng: with lifted eyes
Ask wealth of Heaven, and gain a real prize,
Truth, wisdom, grace, and peace like that above,
Sealed with his signet whom they serve and love;
Scorned by the rest, with patient hope they wait
A kind release from their imperfect state,
And unregretted are soon snatched away
From scenes of sorrow into glorious day.

Now these alone prefer a life recluse,
Who seek retirement for its proper use;
The love of change, that lives in every breast,
Genius and temper, and desire of rest,
Discordant motives in one centre meet,
And each inclines its votary to retreat.
Some minds by nature are averse to noise,
And hate the tumult half the world enjoys,
The lure of avarice, or the pompous prize,
That courts display before ambitious eyes;
The fruits that hang on pleasure's flowery stem,
Whate'er enchants them, are no snares to them.
To them the deep recess of dusky groves
Or forest, where the deer securely roves,
The fall of waters, and the song of birds,
And hills that echo to the distant herds,

Are luxuries excelling all the glare
The world can boast, and her chief favourites share.
With eager step, and carelessly arrayed,
For such a cause the poet seeks the shade,
From all he sees he catches new delight,
Pleased Fancy claps her pinions at the sight,
The rising or the setting orb of day,
The clouds that flit, or slowly float away,
Nature in all the various shapes she wears,
Frowning in storms, or breathing gentle airs;
The snowy robe her wintry state assumes,
Her summer heats, her fruits, and her perfumes:
All, all alike transport the glowing bard,
Success in rhyme his glory and reward.
O Nature! whose Elysian scenes disclose
His bright perfections, at whose word they rose,
Next to that power, who formed thee and sustains,
Be thou the great inspirer of my strains.
Still, as I touch the lyre, do thou expand
Thy genuine charms, and guide an artless hand,
That I may catch a fire but rarely known,
Give useful light, though I should miss renown,
And, poring on thy page, whose every line
Bears proof of an intelligence divine,
May feel a heart enriched by what it pays,
That builds its glory on its Maker's praise.
Wo to the man, whose wit disclaims its use,
Glittering in vain, or only to seduce,
Who studies nature with a wanton eye,
Admires the work, but slips the lesson by;
His hours of leisure and recess employs
In drawing pictures of forbidden joys,
Retires to blazon his own worthless name,
Or shoot the careless with a surer aim.
The lover too shuns business and alarms,
Tender idolater of absent charms.
Saints offer nothing in their warmest prayers,
That he devotes not with a zeal like theirs;
'Tis consecration of his heart, soul, time,
And every thought that wanders is a crime.
In sighs he worships his supremely fair,
And weeps a sad libation in despair;
Adores a creature, and, devout in vain,
Wins in return an answer of disdain.
As woodbine weds the plant within her reach,
Rough elm, or smooth-grained ash, or glossy beech,
In spiral rings ascends the trunk, and lays
Her golden tassels on the leafy sprays,
But does a mischief while she lends a grace,
Straitening its growth by such a strict embrace;
So love, that clings around the noblest minds,
Forbids th' advancement of the soul he binds;
The suitor's air indeed he soon improves,
And forms it to the taste of her he loves,
Teaches his eyes a language, and no less
Refines his speech, and fashions his address;
But farewell promises of happier fruits,
Manly designs, and learning's grave pursuits;
Girt with a chain he can not wish to break,
His only bliss is sorrow for her sake;
Who will may pant for glory and excel,
Her smile his aim, all higher aims farewell!
Thyrsis, Alexis, or whatever name
May least offend against so pure a flame,
Though sage advice of friends the most sincere
Sounds harshly in so delicate a snare,
And lovers, of all creatures, tame or wild,
Can least brook management, however mild;
Yet let a poet (poetry disarms
The fiercest animals with magic charms)
Risk an intrusion on thy pensive mood,
And woo and win thee to thy proper good.
Pastoral images and still retreats,
Umbrageous walks and solitary seats,
Sweet birds in concert with harmonious streams,
Soft airs, nocturnal vigils, and day dreams,
Are all enchantments in a case like thine,
Conspire against thy peace with one design,
Sooth thee to make thee but a surer prey,
And feed the fire that wastes thy powers away.
Up—God has formed thee with a wiser view,
Not to be led in chains, but to subdue;
Calls thee to cope with enemies, and first
Points out a conflict with thyself, the worst.
Woman indeed, a gift he would bestow,
When he designed a Paradise below,
The richest earthly boon his hands afford,
Deserves to be beloved, but not adored.
Post away swiftly to more active scenes,
Collect the scattered truths that study gleans,
Mix with the world, but with its wiser part,
No longer give an image all thine heart;
Its empire is not hers, nor is it thine,
'Tis God's just claim, prerogative divine.

Virtuous and faithful HEBERDEN, whose skill
Attempts no task it can not well fulfil,
Gives melancholy up to Nature's care,
And sends the patient into purer air.
Look where he comes—in this embowered alcove
Stand close concealed, and see a statue move:
Lips busy, and eyes fixed, foot falling slow,
Arms hanging idly down, hands clasped below,
Interpret to the marking eye distress,
Such as its symptoms can alone express.
That tongue is silent now; that silent tongue
Could argue once, could jest or join the song,
Could give advice, could censure or commend,
Or charm the sorrows of a drooping friend.
Renounced alike its office and its sport,
Its brisker and its graver strains fall short;
Both fail beneath a fever's secret sway,
And like a summer brook are past away.
This is a sight for Pity to peruse,
Till she resemble faintly what she views,
Till sympathy contract a kindred pain,
Pierced with the woes that she laments in vain.

This, of all maladies that man infest,
Claims most compassion, and receives the least:
Job felt it, when he groaned beneath the rod
And the barbed arrows of a frowning God;
And such emollients as his friends could spare,
Friends such as his for modern Jobs prepare.
Blest, rather curst, with hearts that never feel,
Kept snug in caskets of close hammered steel.
With mouths made only to grin wide and eat,
And minds, that deem derided pain a treat,
With limbs of British oak, and nerves of wire,
And wit that puppet-prompters might inspire,
Their sovereign nostrum is a clumsy joke
On pangs enforced with God's severest stroke.
But with a soul, that never felt the sting
Of sorrow, sorrow is a sacred thing:
Not to molest, or irritate, or raise
A laugh at his expense, is slender praise;
He, that has not usurped the name of man,
Does all, and deems too little all, he can,
T' assuage the throbbings of the festered part,
And stanch the bleedings of a broken heart.
'Tis not, as heads that never ache suppose,
Forgery of fancy, and a dream of woes;
Man is a harp, whose chords elude the sight,
Each yielding harmony disposed aright;
The screws reversed (a task which, if he please,
God in a moment executes with ease,)
Ten thousand thousand strings at once go loose,
Lost, till he tune them, all their power and use.
Then neither heathy wilds, nor scenes as fair
As ever recompensed the peasant's care,
Nor soft declivities with tufted hills,
Nor view of waters turning busy mills,
Parks in which Art preceptress Nature weds,
Nor gardens interspersed with flowery beds,
Nor gales, that catch the scent of blooming groves,
And waft it to the mourner as he roves,
Can call up life into his faded eye,
That passes all he sees unheeded by;
No wounds like those a wounded spirit feels,
No cure for such till God, who makes them, heals.
And thou, sad sufferer under nameless ill,
That yields not to the touch of human skill,
Improve the kind occasion, understand
A Father's frown, and kiss his chastning hand.
To thee the day-spring, and the blaze of noon,
The purple evening and resplendent noon,
The stars, that, sprinkled o'er the vault of night,
Seem drops descending in a shower of light,
Shine not, or undesired and hated shine,
Seen through the medium of a cloud like thine:
Yet seek him, in his favour life is found,
All bliss beside a shadow and a sound:
Then heaven, eclipsed so long, and this dull earth,
Shall seem to start into a second birth;
Nature, assuming a more lovely face,
Borrowing a beauty from the works of grace,
Shall be despised and overlooked no more,
Shall fill thee with delights unfelt before,
Impart to things inanimate a voice,
And bid her mountains and her hills rejoice;
The sound shall run along the winding vales,
And thou enjoy an Eden ere it fails.

Ye groves (the statesman at his desk exclaims.
Sick of a thousand disappointed aims,)
My patrimonial pleasure and my pride,
Beneath your shades your gray possessor hide,
Receive me languishing for that repose
The servant of the public never knows.
Ye saw me once (ah, those regretted days,
When boyish innocence was all my praise!)
Hour after hour delightfully allot
To studies then familiar, since forgot,
And cultivate a taste for ancient song,
Catching its ardour as I mused along;
Nor seldom, as propitious Heaven might send,
What once I valued and could boast, a friend,
Were witnesses how cordially I pressed
His undissembling virtue to my breast;
Receive me now, not uncorrupt as then,
Nor guiltless of corrupting other men,
But versed in arts, that, while they seem to stay
A falling empire, hasten its decay,
To the fair haven of my native home,
The wreck of what I was, fatigued I come;
For once I can approve the patriot's voice,
And make the course he recommends my choice;
We meet at last in one sincere desire,
His wish and mine both prompt me to retire.
'Tis done—he steps into the welcome chaise,
Lolls at his ease behind four handsome bays,
That whirl away from business and debate
The disencumbered atlas of the state.
Ask not the boy, who, when the breeze of morn
First shakes the glittering drops from every thorn,
Unfolds his flock, then under bank or bush
Sits linking cherry-stones, or platting rush,
How fair is freedom?—he was always free;
To carve his rustic name upon a tree,
To snare the mole, or with ill-fashioned hook,
To draw th' incautious minnow from the brook,
Are life's prime pleasures in his simple view;
His flock the chief concern he ever knew;
She shines but little in his heedless eyes,
The good we never miss we rarely prize:
But ask the noble drudge in state affairs,
Escaped from office and its constant cares,
What charms he sees in Freedom's smile expressed,
In Freedom lost so long, now repossessed;
The tongue, whose strains were cogent as commands,
Revered at home, and felt in foreign lands,
Shall own itself a stammerer in that cause,
Or plead its silence as its best applause.

He knows indeed that whether dressed or rude,
Wild without art or artfully subdued,
Nature in every form inspires delight,
But never marked her with so just a sight,
Her hedge-row shrubs, a variegated store,
With woodbine and wild roses mantled o'er,
Green balks and furrowed lands, the stream, that spreads
Its cooling vapour o'er the dewy meads,
Downs, that almost escape th' inquiring eye,
That melt and fade into the distant sky,
Beauties he lately slighted as he passed,
Seem all created since he travelled last.
Master of all the enjoyments he designed,
No rough annoyance rankling in his mind,
What early philosophic hours he keeps,
How regular his meals, how sound he sleeps!
Not sounder he, that on the mainmast head,
While morning kindles with a windy red,
Begins a long look-out for distant land,
Nor quits till evening watch his giddy stand.
Then swift descending with a seaman's haste,
Slips to his hammock, and forgets the blast.
He chooses company, but not the squire's,
Whose wit is rudeness, whose good-breading tires;
Nor yet the parson's, who would gladly come,
Obsequious when abroad, though proud at home;
Nor can he much affect the neighbouring peer,
Whose toe of emulation treads too near;
But wisely seeks a more convenient friend,
With whom, dismissing forms, he may unbend!
A man, whom marks of condescending grace
Teach while they flatter him, his proper place;
Who comes when called, and at a word withdraws,
Speaks with reserve, and listens with applause;
Some plain mechanic, who, without pretence
To birth or wit, nor gives nor takes offence;
On whom he rests well-pleased his weary powers,
And talks and laughs away his vacant hours.
The tide of life, swift always in its course,
May run in cities with a brisker force.
But nowhere with a current so serene,
Or half so clear, as in the rural scene.
Yet how fallacious is all earthly bliss,
What obvious truths the wisest heads may miss;
Some pleasures live a month, and some a year,
But short the date of all we gather here;
No happiness is felt, except the true,
That does not charm the more for being new.
This observation, as it chanced, not made,
Or, if the thought occurred, not duly weighed,
He sighs—for after all by slow degrees
The spot he loved has lost the power to please;
To cross his ambling pony day by day,
Seems at the best but dreaming life away;
The prospect, such as might enchant despair,
He views it not, or sees no beauty there;
With aching heart, and discontented looks,
Returns at noon to billiards or to books,
But feels, while grasping at his faded joys,
A secret thirst of his renounced employs.
He chides the tardiness of every post,
Pants to be told of battles won or lost,
Blames his own indolence, observes, though late,
'Tis criminal to leave a sinking state,
Flies to the levee, and, received with grace,
Kneels, kisses hands, and shines again in place.

Suburban villas, highway-side retreats,
That dread th' encroachment of our growing streets,
Tight boxes neatly sashed, and in a blaze
With all a July sun's collected rays,
Delight the citizen, who, gasping there,
Breathes clouds of dust, and calls it country air.
O sweet retirement, who would balk the thought,
That could afford retirement, or could not?
'Tis such an easy walk, so smooth and straight,
The second milestone fronts the garden gate;
A step if fair, and if a shower approach,
You find safe shelter in the next stage-coach.
There, prisoned in a parlour snug and small,
Like bottled wasps upon a southern wall,
The man of business and his friends compressed,
Forget their labours, and yet find no rest;
But still, 'tis rural—trees are to be seen
From every window, and the fields are green;
Ducks paddle in the pond before the door,
And what could a remoter scene show more?
A sense of elegance we rarely find
The portion of a mean or vulgar mind,
And ignorance of better things makes man,
Who can not much, rejoice in what he can.
And he, that deems his leisure well bestowed
In contemplation of a turnpike-road,
Is occupied as well, employs his hours
As wisely, and as much improves his powers
As he, that slumbers in pavilions graced
With all the charms of an accomplished taste.
Yet hence, alas! insolvencies; and hence
Th' unpitied victim of ill-judged expense,
From all his wearisome engagements freed,
Shakes hands with business and retires indeed.

Your prudent grand-mammas, ye modern belles
Content with Bristol, Bath, and Tunbridge-wells,
When health required it would consent to roam,
Else more attached to pleasures found at home.
But now alike, gay widow, virgin, wife,
Ingenious to diversify dull life,
In coaches, chaises, caravans, and hoys,
Fly to the coast for daily, nightly joys;
And all, impatient of dry land, agree
With one consent to rush into the sea.—
Ocean exhibits, fathomless and broad,
Much of the power and majesty of God.

He swathes about the swelling of the deep,
That shines and rests, as infants smile and sleep;
Vast as it is, it answers as it flows
The breathings of the lightest air that blows;
Curling and whitening over all the waste,
The rising waves obey th' increasing blast,
Abrupt and horrid as the tempest roars,
Thunder and flash upon the steadfast shores,
Till he, that rides the whirlwind, checks the rain,
Then all the world of waters sleep again.—
Nereids or Dryads, as the fashion leads,
Now in the floods, now panting in the meads,
Votaries of Pleasure still, where'er she dwells,
Near barren rocks, in palaces, or cells,
O grant a poet leave to recommend
(A poet fond of Nature, and your friend)
Her slighted works to your admiring view;
Her works must needs excel, who fashioned you.
Would ye, when rambling in your morning ride,
With some unmeaning coxcomb at your side,
Condemn the prattler for his idle pains,
To waste unheard the music of his strains,
And, deaf to all th' impertinence of tongue,
That, while it courts, affronts and does you wrong,
Mark well the finished plan without a fault,
The seas globose and huge, th' o'erarching vault,
Earth's millions daily fed, a world employed,
In gathering plenty yet to be enjoyed,
Till gratitude grew vocal in the praise
Of God, beneficent in all his ways;
Graced with such wisdom, how would beauty shine!
Ye want but that to seem indeed divine.
Anticipated rents, and bills unpaid,
Force many a shining youth into the shade,
Not to redeem his time, but his estate,
And play the fool, but at a cheaper rate.
There, hid in loathed obscurity, removed
From pleasures left, but never more beloved,
He just endures, and with a sickly spleen
Sighs o'er the beauties of the charming scene.
Nature indeed looks prettily in rhyme;
Streams tinkle sweetly in poetic chime:
The warblings of the blackbird, clear and strong,
Are musical enough in Thomson's song;
And Cobham's groves, and Windsor's green retreats,
When Pope describes them, have a thousand sweets;
He likes the country, but in truth must own
Most likes it, when he studies it in town.
Poor Jack—no matter who—for when I blame
I pity, and must therefore sink the name,
Lived in his saddle, loved the chase, the course,
And always, ere he mounted, kissed his horse.
The estate, his sires had owned in ancient years,
Was quickly distanced, matched against a peer's.
Jack vanished, was regretted and forgot;
'Tis wild good-nature's never-failing lot.
At length, when all had long supposed him dead,
By cold submersion, razor, rope, or lead,
My lord, alighting at his usual place,
The Crown, took notice of an ostler's face.
Jack knew his friend, but hoped in that disguise
He might escape the most observing eyes,
And whistling, as if unconcerned and gay,
Curried his nag, and looked another way.
Convinced at last, upon a nearer view,
'Twas he, the same, the very Jack he knew
O'erwhelmed at once with wonder, grief, and joy,
He pressed him much to quit his base employ;
His countenance, his purse, his heart, his hand,
Influence and power were all at his command:
Peers are not always generous as well bred,
But Granby was, meant truly what he said.
Jack bowed, and was obliged—confessed 'twas strange,
That so retired he should not wish a change,
But knew no medium between guzzling beer,
And his old stint—three thousand pounds a year.
Thus some retire to nourish hopeless wo;
Some seeking happiness not found below;
Some to comply with humour, and a mind
To social scenes by nature disinclined;
Some swayed by fashion, some by deep disgust;
Some self-impoverished, and because they must;
But few, that court Retirement, are aware
Of half the toils they must encounter there.
Lucrative offices are seldom lost
For want of powers proportioned to the post:
Give e'en a dunce th' employment he desires,
And he soon finds the talents it requires;
A business with an income at its heels
Furnishes always oil for its own wheels.
But in his arduous enterprise to close
His active years with indolent repose,
He finds the labours of that state exceed
His utmost faculties, severe indeed.
'Tis easy to resign a toilsome place,
But not to manage leisure with a grace;
Absence of occupation is not rest,
A mind quite vacant is a mind distressed.
The veteran steed, excused his task at length,
In kind compassion of his failing strength,
And turned into the park or mead to graze,
Exempt from future service all his days,
There feels a pleasure perfect in its kind,
Ranges at liberty, and snuffs the wind:
But when his lord would quit the busy road,
To taste a joy like that he had bestowed,
He proves less happy than his favoured brute,
A life of ease a difficult pursuit.
Thought, to the man that never thinks, may seem
As natural as when asleep to dream;
But reveries (for human minds will act)
Specious in show, impossible in fact,
Those flimsy webs, that break as soon as wrought,
Attain not to the dignity of thought:
Nor yet the swarms that occupy the brain,
Where dreams of dress, intrigue, and pleasure reign

Nor such as useless conversation breeds,
Or lust engenders, and indulgence feeds.
Whence, and what are we? to what end ordained?
What means the drama by the world sustained?
Business or vain amusement, care or mirth,
Divide the frail inhabitants of earth.
Is duty a mere sport, or an employ?
Life an intrusted talent, or a toy?
Is there, as reason, conscience, Scripture, say,
Cause to provide for a great future day,
When, earth's assigned duration at an end,
Man shall be summoned and the dead attend?
The trumpet—will it sound, the curtain rise,
And show th' august tribunal of the skies;
Where no prevarication shall avail,
Where eloquence and artifice shall fail,
The pride of arrogant distinctions fall,
And conscience and our conduct judge us all?
Pardon me, ye that give the midnight oil
To learned cares, or philosophic toil,
Though I revere your honourable names,
Your useful labours and important aims,
And hold the world indebted to your aid,
Enriched with the discoveries ye have made;
Yet let me stand excused, if I esteem
A mind employed on so sublime a theme,
Pushing her bold inquiry to the date
And outline of the present transient state,
And, after poising her adventurous wings,
Settling at last upon eternal things,
Far more intelligent and better taught
The strenuous use of profitable thought,
Than ye, when happiest, and enlightened most,
And highest in renown, can justly boast.

A mind unnerved, or indisposed to bear
The weight of subjects worthiest of her care.
Whatever hopes a change of scene inspires,
Must change her nature, or in vain retires.
An idler is a watch, that wants both hands,
As useless if it goes, as when it stands.
Books, therefore, not the scandal of the shelves,
In which lewd sensualists print out themselves;
Nor those, in which the stage gives vice a blow,
With what success let modern manners show;
Nor his, who, for the bane of thousands born,
Built God a church, and laughed his word to scorn,
Skilful alike to seem devout and just,
And stab religion with a sly side-thrust;
Nor those of learned philologists, who chase
A panting syllable through time and space,
Start at it home, and hunt it in the dark,
To Gaul, to Greece, and into Noah's ark;
But such as Learning without false pretence,
The friend of Truth, th' associate of good Sense,
And such as, in the zeal of good design,
Strong judgment labouring in the Scripture mine,
All such as manly and great souls produce,
Worthy to live, and of eternal use:
Behold in these what leisure hours demand,
Amusement and true knowledge hand in hand.
Luxury gives the mind a childish cast,
And, while she polishes, perverts the taste;
Habits of close attention, thinking heads,
Become more rare as dissipation spreads,
Till authors hear at length one general cry,—
Tickle and entertain us, or we die.
The loud demand, from year to year the same,
Beggars Invention, and makes Fancy lame;
Till farce itself, most mournfully jejune,
Calls for the kind assistance of a tune;
And novels (witness every month's review
Belie their name, and offer nothing new.
The mind, relaxing into needful sport,
Should turn to writers of an abler sort,
Whose wit well managed, and whose classic style
Give truth a lustre, and make wisdom smile.
Friends (for I can not stint, as some have done,
Too rigid in my view, that name to one;
Though one, I grant it, in the generous breast
Will stand advanced a step above the rest;
Flowers by that name promiscuously we call,
But one, the rose, the regent of them all)—
Friends, not adopted with a schoolboy's haste,
But chosen with a nice discerning taste,
Well-born, well-disciplined, who, placed apart
From vulgar minds, have honour much at heart,
And, though the world may think th' ingredients odd,
The love of virtue, and the fear of God!
Such friends prevent what else would soon succeed,
A temper rustic as the life we lead,
And keep the polish of the manners clean
As theirs who bustle in the busiest scene;
For solitude, however some may rave,
Seeming a sanctuary, proves a grave,
A sepulchre in which the living lie,
Where all good qualities grow sick and die.
I praise the Frenchman,* his remark was shrewd—
How sweet, how passing sweet, is solitude!
But grant me still a friend in my retreat,
Whom I may whisper—solitude is sweet.
Yet neither these delights, nor aught beside,
That appetite can ask, or wealth provide,
Can save us always from a tedious day,
Or shine the dullness of still life away:
Divine communion, carefully enjoyed,
Or sought with energy, must fill the void.
O sacred art, to which alone life owes
Its happiest seasons, and a peaceful close,
Scorned in a world, indebted to that scorn
For evils daily felt and hardly borne,
Not knowing thee, we reap with bleeding hands
Flowers of rank odour upon thorny lands,
And, while Experience cautions us in vain,
Grasp seeming happiness, and find it pain.

* Bruyere.

Despondence, self-deserted in her grief,
Lost by abandoning her own relief,
Murmuring and ungrateful Discontent,
That scorns afflictions mercifully meant,
Those humours, tart as wine upon the fret,
Which idleness and weariness beget;
These, and a thousand plagues, that haunt the breast,
Fond of the phantom of an earthly rest,
Divine communion chases, as the day
Drives to their dens th' obedient beasts of prey.
See Judah's promised king bereft of all,
Driven out an exile from the face of Saul,
To distant caves the lonely wanderer flies,
To seek that peace a tyrant's frown denies.
Hear the sweet accents of his tuneful voice,
Hear him, o'erwhelmed with sorrow, yet rejoice;
No womanish or wailing grief has part,
No, not for a moment, in his royal heart;
'Tis manly music, such as martyrs make,
Suffering with gladness for a Saviour's sake;
His soul exults, hope animates his lays,
The sense of mercy kindles into praise,
And wilds, familiar with a lion's roar,
Ring with ecstatic sounds unheard before:
'Tis love like his, that can alone defeat
The foes of man, or make a desert sweet.

Religion does not censure or exclude
Unnumbered pleasures harmlessly pursued;
To study culture, and with artful toil
To meliorate and tame the stubborn soil;
To give dissimilar yet fruitful lands
The grain, or herb, or plant that each demands;
To cherish virtue in an humble state,
And share the joys your bounty may create;
To mark the matchless workings of the power
That shuts within its seed the future flower,
Bids these in elegance of form excel,
In colour these, and those delight the smell,
Sends Nature forth the daughter of the skies,
To dance on earth, and charm all human eyes;
To teach the canvass innocent deceit,
Or lay the landscape on the snowy sheet—
These, these are arts pursued without a crime,
That leave no stain upon the wing of Time.

Me poetry (or rather notes that aim
Feebly and vainly at poetic fame)
Employs, shut out from more important views,
Fast by the banks of the slow winding Ouse;
Content if thus sequestered I may raise
A monitor's though not a poet's praise,
And while I teach an art too little known,
To close life wisely, may not waste my own.

The Task.

BOOK I.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The history of the following production is briefly this: A lady, fond of blank verse, demanded a poem of that kind from the author, and gave him the SOFA for a subject. He obeyed; and having much leisure, connected another subject with it; and pursuing the train of thought to which his situation and turn of mind led him, brought forth at length, instead of the trifle which he at first intended, a serious affair—a Volume.

In the poem on the subject of Education, he would be very sorry to stand suspected of having aimed his censure at any particular school. His objections are such, as naturally apply themselves to schools in general. If there were not, as for the most part there is, wilful neglect in those who manage them, and an omission even of such discipline as they are susceptible of, the objects are yet too numerous for minute attention; and the aching hearts of ten thousand parents, mourning under the bitterest of all disappointments, attest the truth of the allegation. His quarrel, therefore, is with the mischief at large, and not with any particular instance of it.

THE SOFA.

ARGUMENT.

Historical deduction of seats, from the Stool to the Sofa.—A Schoolboy's ramble.—A walk in the country.—The scene described.—Rural sounds as well as sights delightful.—Another walk—Mistake concerning the charms of solitude corrected.—Colonnades commended.—Alcove, and the view from it.—The wilderness.—The grove.—The thresher.—The necessity and the benefits of exercise.—The works of nature superior to, and in some instances inimitable by, art.—The wearisomeness of what is commonly called a life of pleasure.—Change of scene sometimes expedient.—A common described, and the character of crazy Kate introduced.—Gipsies.—The blessings of civilized life.—That state most favourable to virtue.—The South Sea islanders compassionated, but chiefly Omai.—His present state of mind supposed.—Civilized life friendly to virtue, but not great cities.—Great cities, and London in particular, allowed their due praises, but censured.—Fete Champetre.—The book concludes with a reflection on the fatal effects of dissipation and effeminacy upon our public measures.

I SING the Sofa, I, who lately sang
Truth, Hope, and Charity, and touched with awe
The solemn chords, and with a trembling hand,
Escaped with pain from that adventurous flight,
Now seek repose upon an humbler theme;
The theme though humble, yet august and proud
Th' occasion—for the Fair commands the song.

Time was, when clothing sumptuous or for use,

Save their own painted skins, our sires had none.
As yet black breeches were not; satin smooth,
Or velvet soft, or plush with shaggy pile;
The hardy chief upon the rugged rock
Washed by the sea, or on the gravelly bank
Thrown up by wintry torrents roaring loud,
Fearless of wrong, reposed his weary strength.
Those barbarous ages past, succeeded next
The birth-day of invention; weak at first,
Dull in design, and clumsy to perform.
Joint-stools were then created; on three legs
Upborne they stood. Three legs upholding firm
A massy slab, in fashion square or round.
On such a stool immortal Alfred sat,
And swayed the sceptre of his infant realms:
And such in ancient halls and mansions drear
May still be seen; but perforated sore,
And drilled in holes, the solid oak is found,
By worms voracious eaten through and through.

At length a generation more refined
Improved the simple plan; made three legs four,
Gave them a twisted form vermicular,
And o'er the seat with plenteous wadding stuffed,
Induced a splendid cover, green and blue,
Yellow and red, of tapestry richly wrought
And woven close, or needlework sublime.
There might you see the piony spread wide,
The full blown rose, the shepherd and his lass,
Lapdog and lambkin with black staring eyes,
And parrots with twin cherries in their beak.

Now came the cane from India, smooth and bright
With Nature's varnish; severed into stripes,
That interlaced each other, these supplied
Of texture firm a lattice-work, that braced
The new machine, and it became a chair.
But restless was the chair; the back erect
Distressed the weary loins, that felt no ease;
The slippery seat betrayed the sliding part
That pressed it, and the feet hung dangling down,
Anxious in vain, to find the distant floor.
These for the rich; the rest, whom Fate had placed
In modest mediocrity, content
With base materials, sat on well tanned hides,
Obdurate and unyielding, glassy smooth,
With here and there a tuft of crimson yarn,
Or scarlet crewel, in the cushion fixed,
If cushion might be called, what harder seemed
Than the firm oak, of which the frame was formed.
No want of timber then was felt or feared
In Albion's happy isle. The lumber stood
Ponderous and fixed by its own massy weight.
But elbows still were wanting; these, some say
An alderman of Cripplegate contrived;
And some ascribe th' invention to a priest,
Burly, and big, and studious of his ease.
But rude at first, and not with easy slope
Receding wide, they pressed against the ribs,
And bruised the side; and, elevated high,
Taught the raised shoulders to invade the ears.
Long time elapsed or e'er our rugged sires
Complained, though incommodiously pent in,
And ill at ease behind. The ladies first
'Gan murmur, as became the softer sex.
Ingenious Fancy, never better pleased,
Than when employed t' accommodate the fair,
Heard the sweet moan with pity, and devised
The soft settee; one elbow at each end.
And in the midst an elbow it received,
United yet divided, twain at once.
So sit two kings of Brentford on one throne;
And so two citizens, who take the air,
Close packed, and smiling, in a chaise and one.
But relaxation of the languid frame,
Was bliss reserved for happier days. So slow
The growth of what is excellent; so hard
T' attain perfection in this nether world.
Thus first necessity invented stools,
Convenience next suggested elbow chairs,
And Luxury th' accomplished Sofa last.

The nurse sleeps sweetly, hired to watch the sick,
Whom snoring she disturbs. As sweetly he,
Who quits the coach-box at the midnight hour,
To sleep within the carriage more secure,
His legs depending at the open door.
Sweet sleep enjoys the curate in his desk,
The tedious rector drawling o'er his head;
And sweet the clerk below. But neither sleep
Of lazy nurse, who snores the sick man dead;
Nor his, who quits the box at midnight hour,
To slumber in the carriage more secure;
Nor sleep enjoyed by curate in his desk;
Nor yet the dozings of the clerk, are sweet,
Compared with the repose the Sofa yields.

O may I live exempted (while I live
Guiltless of pampered appetite obscene)
From pangs arthritic, that infest the toe
Of libertine Excess. The Sofa suits
The gouty limb, 'tis true: but gouty limb
Though on a Sofa, may I never feel,
For I have loved the rural walk through lanes
Of grassy swarth, close cropped by nibbling sheep
And skirted thick with intertexture firm
Of thorny boughs; have loved the rural walk
O'er hills, through valleys, and by rivers' brink,
E'er since a truant boy I passed my bounds,
T' enjoy a ramble on the banks of Thames:
And still remember nor without regret
Of hours, that sorrow since has much endeared,
How oft, my slice of pocket store consumed,
Still hungering, pennyless, and far from home,
I fed on scarlet hips and stony haws,
Or blushing crabs, or berries, that emboss
The bramble, black as jet, or sloes austere.
Hard fare! but such as boyish appetite
Disdains not; nor the palate, undepraved
By culinary arts, unsavoury deems.
No Sofa then awaited my return;
Nor Sofa then I needed. Youth repairs

His wasted spirits quickly, by long toil
Incurring short fatigue; and though our years,
As life declines, speed rapidly away,
And not a year but pilfers as he goes
Some youthful grace, that age would gladly keep;
A tooth or auburn lock, and by degrees
Their length and colour from the locks they spare;
Th' elastic spring of an unwearied foot,
That mounts the stile with ease, or leaps the fence,
That play of lungs, inhaling and again
Respiring freely the fresh air, that makes
Swift pace or steep ascent, no toil to me,
Mine have not pilfered yet, nor yet impaired
My relish of fair prospect; scenes that soothed
Or charmed me young, no longer young, I find
Still soothing, and of power to charm me still.
And witness, dear companion of my walks,
Whose arm this twentieth winter I perceive
Fast locked in mine, with pleasure such as love,
Confirmed by long experience of thy worth
And well tried virtues could alone inspire—
Witness a joy that thou hast doubled long.
Thou knowest my praise of nature most sincere,
And that my raptures are not conjured up
To serve occasions of poetic pomp,
But genuine, and art partner of them all.
How oft upon yon eminence our pace
Has slackened to a pause, and we have borne
The ruffling wind, scarce conscious that it blew,
While admiration, feeding at the eye,
And still unsated, dwelt upon the scene.
Thence with what pleasure have we just discerned
The distant plough slow moving, and beside
His labouring team, that swerved not from the track,
The sturdy swain diminished to a boy!
Here Ouse, slow winding through a level plain
Of spacious meads with cattle sprinkled o'er,
Conducts the eye along his sinuous course
Delighted. There, fast rooted in their bank,
Stand, never overlooked, our favourite elms,
That screens the herdsman's solitary hut;
While far beyond, and overthwart the stream,
That, as with molten glass, inlays the vale,
The sloping land recedes into the clouds;
Displaying on its varied side the grace
Of hedge-row beauties numberless, square tower,
Tall spire, from which the sound of cheerful bells
Just undulates upon the listening ear,
Groves, heaths, and smoking villages, remote.
Scenes must be beautiful, which daily viewed
Please daily, and whose novelty survives
Long knowledge and the scrutiny of years:
Praise justly due to those that I describe.
Nor rural sights alone, but rural sounds,
Exhilarate the spirit and restore
The tone of languid Nature. Mighty winds,
That sweep the skirt of some far-spreading wood
Of ancient growth, make music not unlike
The dash of Ocean on his winding shore,
And lull the spirit while they fill the mind;
Unnumbered branches waving in the blast,
And all their leaves fast fluttering, all at once.
Nor less composure waits upon the roar
Of distant floods, or on the softer voice
Of neighbouring fountain, or of rills that slip
Through the cleft rock, and, chiming as they fall
Upon loose pebbles, lose themselves at length
In matted grass, that with a livelier green
Betrays the secret of their silent course.
Nature inanimate employs sweet sounds,
But animated nature sweeter still,
To sooth and satisfy the human ear.
Ten thousand warblers cheer the day, and one
The livelong night: nor these alone, whose notes
Nice-fingered art must emulate in vain,
But cawing rooks, and kites that swim sublime
In still repeated circles, screaming loud,
The jay, the pie, and e'en the boding owl,
That hails the rising moon, have charms for me.
Sounds inharmonious in themselves and harsh,
Yet heard in scenes where peace for ever reigns,
And only there, please highly for their sake.
Peace to the artist whose ingenious thought
Devised the weather-house, that useful toy!
Fearless of humid air and gathering rains,
Forth steps the man—an emblem of myself!
More delicate his timorous mate retires.
When Winter soaks the fields, and female feet,
Too weak to struggle with tenacious clay,
Or ford the rivulets, are best at home,
The task of new discoveries falls on me.
At such a season, and with such a charge,
Once went I forth; and found, till then unknown,
A cottage, whither oft we since repair;
'Tis perched upon the green hill tops, but close
Environed with a ring of branching elms,
That overhang the thatch, itself unseen
Peeps at the vale below; so thick beset
With foliage of such dark redundant growth,
I called the low-roofed lodge the *peasant's nest.*
And, hidden as it is, and far remote
From such unpleasing sounds, as haunt the ear
In village or in town, the bay of curs
Incessant, clinking hammers, grinding wheels,
And infants clamorous, whether pleased or pained.
Oft have I wished the peaceful covert mine.
Here, I have said, at least I should possess
The poet's treasure, silence, and indulge
The dreams of fancy, tranquil and secure.
Vain thought! the dweller in that still retreat
Dearly obtains the refuge it affords.
Its elevated site forbids the wretch
To drink sweet waters of the crystal well;
He dips the bowl into the weedy ditch,
And, heavy laden, brings his beverage home,
Far fetched and little worth; nor seldom waits,
Dependent on the baker's punctual call,
To hear his creaking panniers at the door,

Angry and sad, and his last crust consumed,
So farewell envy of the *peasant's nest!*
If solitude makes scant the means of life,
Society for me!—thou seeming sweet,
Be still a pleasing object in my view;
My visit still, but never mine abode.

Not distant far, a length of colonnade
Invites us. Monument of ancient taste,
Now scorned, but worthy of a better fate.
Our fathers knew the value of a screen
From sultry suns: and, in their shaded walks
And long protracted bowers, enjoyed at noon
The gloom and coolness of declining day.
We bear our shades about us; self-deprived
Of other screen, the thin umbrella spread,
And range an Indian waste without a tree.
Thanks to Benevolus* he spares me yet
These chestnuts ranged in corresponding lines;
And, though himself so polished, still reprieves
The obsolete prolixity of shade.

Descending now (but cautious, lest too fast)
A sudden steep, upon a rustic bridge
We pass a gulf, in which the willows dip
Their pendent boughs, stooping as if to drink.
Hence, ankle deep in moss and flowery thyme,
We mount again, and feel at every step
Our foot half sunk in hillocks green and soft,
Raised by the mole, the miner of the soil.
He, not unlike the great ones of mankind,
Disfigures Earth: and, plotting in the dark,
Toils much to earn a monumental pile,
That may record the mischiefs he has done.

The summit gained, behold the proud alcove
That crowns it! yet not all its pride secures
The grand retreat from injuries impressed
By rural carvers, who with knives deface
The pannels, leaving an obscure, rude name,
In characters uncouch, and spelt amiss.
So strong the zeal to immortalize himself
Beats in the breast of man, that e'en a few,
Few transient years, won from th' abyss abhorred
Of blank oblivion, seem a glorious prize,
And even to a clown. Now roves the eye;
And, posted on this speculative height,
Exults in its command. The sheepfold here
Pours out its fleecy tenants o'er the glebe.
At first, progressive as a stream, they seek
The middle field; but scattered by degrees,
Each to his choice, soon whiten all the land.
There from the sun-burnt hayfield homeward creeps
The loaded wain; while, lightened of its charge,
The wain that meets it passes swiftly by;
The boorish driver leaning o'er his team
Vociferous, and impatient of delay.
Nor less attractive is the woodland scene,
Diversified with trees of every growth,
Alike, yet various. Here the gray smooth trunks
Of ash, or lime, or beech, distinctly shine,
Within the twilight of their distant shades;
There, lost behind a rising ground, the wood
Seems sunk, and shortened to its topmast boughs.
No tree in all the grove but has its charms,
Though each its hue peculiar; paler some,
And of a wanish gray; the willow such,
And poplar, that with silver lines his leaf,
And ash far stretching his umbrageous arm;
Of deeper green the elm; and deeper still,
Lord of the woods, the long-surviving oak.
Some glossy-leaved, and shining in the sun,
The maple, and the beech of oily nuts
Prolific, and the lime at dewy eve
Diffusing odours: nor unnoted pass
The sycamore, capricious in attire,
Now green, now tawny, and ere autumn yet
Have changed the woods, in scarlet honours bright.
O'er these, but far beyond (a spacious map
Of hill and valley interposed between,)
The Ouse dividing the well-watered land,
Now glitters in the sun, and now retires,
As, bashful, yet impatient to be seen.

Hence the declivity is sharp and short,
And such the reascent; between them weeps
A little naiad her impoverished urn
All summer long, which winter fills again.
The folded gates would bar my progress now
But that the lord* of this enclosed demesne,
Communicative of the good he owns,
Admits me to a share; the guiltless eye
Commits no wrong, nor wastes what it enjoys.
Refreshing change! where now the blazing sun?
By short transition we have lost his glare,
And stepped at once into a cooler clime.
Ye fallen avenues! once more I mourn
Your fate unmerited, once more rejoice
That yet a remnant of your race survives.
How airy and how light the graceful arch,
Yet awful as the consecrated roof
Re-echoing pious anthems! while beneath
The checkered earth seems restless as a flood
Brushed by the wind. So sportive is the light
Shot through the boughs, it dances as they dance.
Shadow and sunshine intermingling quick,
And darkening and enlightening, as the leaves
Play wanton, every moment, every spot.

And now, with nerves new-braced and spirits cheered,
We tread the wilderness, whose well-rolled walks,
With curvature of slow and easy sweep—
Deception innocent—give ample space
To narrow bounds. The grove receives us next

* John Courtney Throckmorton, Esq. of Weston Underwood

* See the foregoing note.

Between the upright shafts of whose tall elms
We may discern the thresher at his task.
Thump after thump resounds the constant flail,
That seems to swing uncertain, and yet falls
Full on the destined ear. Wide flies the chaff,
The rustling straw sends up a frequent mist
Of atoms, sparkling in the noonday beam.
Come hither, ye that press your beds of down,
And sleep not; see him sweating o'er his bread
Before he eats it. 'Tis the primal curse,
But softened into mercy; and made the pledge
Of cheerful days, and nights without a groan.

By ceaseless action all that is subsists.
Constant rotation of th' unwearied wheel,
That nature rides upon, maintains her health,
Her beauty, her fertility. She dreads
An instant's pause, and lives but while she moves.
Its own revolvency upholds the world.
Winds from all quarters agitate the air,
And fit the limpid element for use,
Else noxious; oceans, rivers, lakes, and streams,
All feel the freshening impulse, and are cleansed
By restless undulation; e'en the oak
Thrives by the rude concussion of the storm:
He seems indeed indignant, and to feel
Th' impression of the blast with proud disdain,
Frowning, as if in his unconscious arm
He held the thunder: but the monarch owes
His firm stability to what he scorns,
More fixed below, the more disturbed above.
The law, by which all creatures else are bound,
Binds man, the lord of all. Himself derives
No mean advantage from a kindred cause,
From strenuous toil his hours of sweetest ease.
The sedentary stretch their lazy length
When Custom bids, but no refreshment find,
For none they need: the languid eye, the cheek
Deserted of its bloom, the flaccid, shrunk,
And withered muscle, and the vapid soul,
Reproach their owner with that love of rest,
To which he forfeits e'en the rest he loves.
Not such the alert and active. Measure life
By its true worth, the comfort it affords,
And theirs alone seems worthy of the name.
Good health, and, its associate in the most,
Good temper; spirits prompt to undertake,
And not soon spent, though in an arduous task;
The powers of fancy and strong thought are theirs;
E'en age itself seems privileged in them
With clear exemption from its own defects.
A sparkling eye beneath a wrinkled front
The veteran shows, and gracing a gray beard
With youthful smiles, descends toward the grave
Sprightly and old almost without decay.

Like a coy maiden, Ease, when courted most,
Farthest retires—an idol, at whose shrine
Who oftenest sacrifice are favoured least.
The love of Nature, and the scenes she draws
Is Nature's dictate. Strange! there should be found
Who, self-imprisoned in their proud saloons,
Renounce the odours of the open field
For the unscented fictions of the loom:
Who, satisfied with only pencilled scenes,
Prefer to the performance of a God
Th' inferior wonders of an artist's hand!
Lovely indeed the mimic works of Art;
But Nature's works far lovelier. I admire,
None more admires, the painter's magic skill,
Who shows me that which I shall never see,
Conveys a distant country into mine,
And throws Italian light on English walls:
But imitative strokes can do no more
Than please the eye—sweet Nature's every sense,
The air salubrious of her lofty hills,
The cheering fragrance of her dewy vales
And music of her woods—no works of man
May rival these, these all bespeak a power
Peculiar, and exclusively her own.
Beneath the open sky she spreads the feast;
'Tis free to all—'tis every day renewed;
Who scorns it starves deservedly at home.
He does not scorn it, who, imprisoned long
In some unwholesome dungeon, and a prey
To sallow sickness, which the vapours, dank
And clammy, of his dark abode have bred,
Escapes at last to liberty and light:
His cheek recovers soon its healthful hue;
His eye relumines its extinguished fires;
He walks, he leaps, he runs—is winged with joy,
And riots in the sweets of every breeze.
He does not scorn it, who has long endured
A fever's agonies, and fed on drugs.
Nor yet the mariner, his blood inflamed
With acrid salts: his very heart athirst,
To gaze at Nature in her green array,
Upon the ship's tall side he stands, possessed
With visions prompted by intense desire:
Fair fields appear below, such as he left
Far distant, such as he would die to find—
He seeks them headlong, and is seen no more.
The spleen is seldom felt where Flora reigns,
The lowering eye, the petulance, the frown,
And sullen sadness, that o'ershade, distort,
And mar the face of beauty, when no cause
For such immeasurable wo appears,
These Flora banishes, and gives the fair
Sweet smiles, and bloom less transient than her own.
It is the constant revolution, stale
And tasteless, of the same repeated joys,
That palls and satiates, and makes languid life
A pedler's pack, that bows the bearer down.
Health suffers, and the spirits ebb, the heart
Recoils from its own choice—at the full feast
Is famished—finds no music in the song,
No smartness in the jest; and wonders why

Yet thousands still desire to journey on,
Though halt, and weary of the path they tread.
The paralytic, who can hold her cards,
But can not play them, borrows a friend's hand
To deal and shuffle, to divide and sort
Her mingled suits and sequences; and sits,
Spectatress both and spectacle, a sad
And silent cipher, while her proxy plays.
Others are dragged into the crowded room
Between supporters; and, once seated, sit,
Through downright inability to rise,
Till the stout bearers lift the corpse again.
These speak a loud memento. Yet e'en these
Themselves love life, and cling to it, as he,
That overhangs a torrent, to a twig.
They love it, and yet loath it; fear to die,
Yet scorn the purposes for which they live.
Then wherefore not renounce them? No—the dread,
The slavish dread of solitude, that breeds
Reflection and remorse, the fear of shame,
And their inveterate habits, all forbid.

Whom call we gay? That honour has been long
The boast of mere pretenders to the name.
The innocent are gay, the lark is gay,
That dries his feathers, saturate with dew,
Beneath the rosy cloud, while yet the beams
Of dayspring overshoot his humble nest.
The peasant too, a witness of his song,
Himself a songster, is as gay as he.
But save me from the gayety of those,
Whose headachs nail them to a noonday bed;
And save me too from theirs, whose haggard eyes
Flash desperation and betray their pangs
For property stripped off by cruel chance;
From gayety, that fills the bones with pain,
The mouth with blasphemy, the heart with wo.

The earth was made so various, that the mind
Of desultory man, studious of change,
And pleased with novelty, might be indulged.
Prospects, however lovely, may be seen
Till half their beauties fade; the weary sight,
Too well acquainted with their smiles, slides off
Fastidious, seeking less familiar scenes.
Then snug enclosures in the sheltered vale,
Where frequent hedges intercept the eye,
Delight us; happy to renounce awhile,
Not senseless of its charms, what still we love,
That such short absense may endear it more.
Then forests, or the savage rock, may please,
That hides the seamew in his hollow clefts
Above the reach of man. His hoary head,
Conspicuous many a league, the mariner
Bound homeward, and in hope already there,
Greets with three cheers exulting. At his waist,
A girdle of half-withered shrubs he shows,
And at his feet the baffled billows die.
The common, overgrown with fern, and rough
With prickly gorse, that, shapeless and deformed,
And dangerous to the touch, has yet its bloom,
And decks itself with ornaments of gold,
Yields no unpleasing ramble; there the turf
Smells fresh, and, rich in odoriferous herbs
And fungous fruits of earth, regales the sense
With luxury of unexpected sweets.

There often wanders one, whom better days
Saw better clad, in cloak of satin trimmed
With lace, and hat with splendid riband bound.
A servant maid was she, and fell in love
With one who left her, went to sea, and died.
Her fancy followed him through foaming waves
To distant shores; and she would sit and weep
At what a sailor suffers; fancy too,
Delusive most where warmest wishes are,
Would oft anticipate his glad return,
And dream of transports she was not to know.
She heard the doleful tidings of his death—
And never smiled again! and now she roams
The dreary waste; there spends the livelong day,
And there, unless when charity forbids,
The livelong night. A tattered apron hides,
Worn as a cloak, and hardly hides a gown
More tattered still; and both but ill conceal
A bosom heaved with never-ceasing sighs.
She begs an idle pin of all she meets,
And hoards them in her sleeve; but needful food,
Tho' pressed with hunger oft, or comelier clothes,
Tho' pinched with cold asks never.—Kate is crazed.

I see a column of slow-rising smoke
O'ertop the lofty wood that skirts the wild.
A vagabond and useless tribe there eat
Their miserable meal. A kettle slung
Between two poles upon a stick transverse,
Receives the morsel—flesh obscene of dog,
Or vermin, or at best of cock purloined
From his accustomed perch. Hard faring race!
They pick their fuel out of every hedge,
Which, kindled with dry leaves, just saves unquenched
The spark of life. The sportive wind blows wide
Their fluttering rags, and shows a tawny skin,
The vellum of the pedigree they claim.
Great skill have they in palmistry, and more
To conjure clean away the gold they touch,
Conveying worthless dross into its place;
Loud when they beg, dumb only when they steal.
Strange! that a creature rational, and cast
In human mould, should brutalize by choice
His nature; and though capable of arts,
By which the world might profit, and himself,
Self-banished from society, prefer
Such squallid sloth to honourable toil!
Yet even these, though feigning sickness, oft
They swathe the forehead, drag the limping limb,
And vex their flesh with artificial sores,
Can change their whine into a mirthful note,
When safe occasion offers; and with dance,
And music of the bladder and the bag,

Beguile their woes, and make the woods resound.
Such health and gayety of heart enjoy
The houseless rovers of the sylvan world;
And, breathing wholesome air, and wandering much,
Need other physic none to heal th' effects
Of loathsome diet, penury and cold.

Blest he, though undistinguished from the crowd
By wealth or dignity, who dwells secure,
Where man, by nature fierce, has laid aside
His fierceness, having learnt, though slow to learn,
The manners and the arts of civil life.
His wants indeed are many; but supply
Is obvious, placed within the easy reach
Of temperate wishes and industrious hands.
Here virtue thrives as in her proper soil;
Not rude and surly, and beset with thorns,
And terrible to sight, as when she springs
(If e'er she springs spontaneous) in remote
And barbarous climes, where violence prevails,
And strength is lord of all; but gentle, kind,
By culture tamed, by liberty refreshed,
And all her fruits by radiant truth matured.
War and the chase engross the savage whole;
War followed for revenge, or to supplant
The envied tenants of some happier spot:
The chase for sustenance, precarious trust!
His hard condition with severe constraint
Binds all his faculties, forbids all growth
Of wisdom, proves a school, in which he learns
Sly circumvention, unrelenting hate,
Mean self-attachment, and scarce aught beside.
Thus fare the shivering natives of the north,
And thus the rangers of the western world,
Where it advances far into the deep,
Towards the antarctic. E'en the favoured isles
So lately found, although the constant sun
Cheer all their seasons with a grateful smile,
Can boast but little virtue; and inert
Through plenty, lose in morals what they gain
In manners—victims of luxurious ease.
These therefore I can pity, placed remote
From all that science traces, art invents,
Or inspiration teaches; and enclosed
In boundless oceans, never to be passed
By navigators uninformed as they,
Or ploughed perhaps by British bark again:
But far beyond the rest, and with most cause,
Thee, gentle savage!* whom no love of thee
Or thine, but curiosity perhaps,
Or else vainglory, prompted us to draw
Forth from thy native bowers to show thee here
With what superior skill we can abuse
The gifts of Providence, and squander life.
The dream is past; and thou hast found again
Thy cocoas and bananas, palms and yams,
And homestall thatched with leaves. But hast thou found
Their former charms? And having seen our state
Our palaces, our ladies, and our pomp
Of equipage, our gardens, and our sports,
And heard our music; are thy simple friends,
Thy simple fare, and all thy plain delights,
As dear to thee as once? And have thy joys
Lost nothing by comparison with ours?
Rude as thou art, (for we returned thee rude
And ignorant, except of outward show)
I can not think thee yet so dull of heart
And spiritless, as never to regret
Sweets tasted here, and left as soon as known.
Methinks I see thee straying on the beach,
And asking of the surge that bathes thy foot,
If ever it has washed our distant shore.
I see thee weep, and thine are honest tears,
A patriot's for his country: thou art sad
At thought of her forlorn and abject state,
From which no power of thine can raise her up.
Thus Fancy paints thee, and, though apt to err,
Perhaps errs little, when she paints thee thus.
She tells me too, that duly every morn
Thou climbest the mountain top, with eager eye
Exploring far and wide the watery waste
For sight of ship from England. Every speck
Seen in the dim horizon turns thee pale
With conflict of contending hopes and fears.
But comes at last the dull and dusky eve,
And sends thee to thy cabin, well prepared
To dream all night of what the day denied.
Alas! expect it not. We found no bait
To tempt us in thy country. Doing good,
Disinterested good, is not our trade.
We travel far, 'tis true, but not for nought;
And must be bribed to compass earth again
By other hopes and richer fruits than yours.
But though true worth and virtue in the mild
And genial soil of cultivated life
Thrive most, and may perhaps thrive only there,
Yet not in cities oft: in proud, and gay,
And gain devoted cities. Thither flow,
As to a common and most noisome sewer,
The dregs and feculence of every land.
In cities foul example on most minds
Begets its likeness. Rank abundance breeds,
In gross and pampered cities, sloth, and lust,
And wantonness, and gluttonous excess.
In cities vice is hidden with most ease,
Or seen with least reproach; and virtue, taught
By frequent lapse, can hope no triumph there
Beyond th' achievements of successful flight.
I do confess them nurseries of the arts,
In which they flourish most; where, in the beams
Of warm encouragement, and in the eye
Of public note, they reach their perfect size.
Such London is, by taste and wealth proclaimed
The fairest capital of all the world,

* Omai.

By riot and incontinence the worst.
There, touched by Reynolds, a dull blank becomes
A lucid mirror, in which Nature sees
All her reflected features. Bacon there
Gives more than female beauty to a stone,
And Chatham's eloquence to marble lips.
Nor does the chisel occupy alone
The powers of sculpture, but the style as much,
Each province of her art her equal care.
With nice incision of her guided steel
She ploughs a brazen field, and clothes a soil
So sterile with what charms soe'er she will,
The richest scenery and the loveliest forms.
Where finds Philosophy her eagle eye,
With which she gazes at yon burning disk
Undazzled, and detects and counts his spots?
In London. Where her implements exact,
With which she calculates, computes, and scans,
All distance, motion, magnitude, and now
Measures an atom, and now girds a world?
In London. Where has commerce such a mart,
So rich, so thronged, so drained, and so supplied,
As London—opulent, enlarged, and still
Increasing London? Babylon of old
Not more the glory of the earth than she,
A more accomplished world's chief glory now.
She has her praise. Now mark a spot or two,
That so much beauty would do well to purge;
And show this queen of cities, that so fair
May yet be foul; so witty, yet not wise.
It is not seemly, nor of good report,
That she is slack in discipline; more prompt
T' avenge than to prevent the breach of law
That she is rigid in denouncing death
On petty robbers, and indulges life
And liberty, and oft times honour too,
To peculators of the public gold:
That thieves at home must hang; but he, that puts,
Into his overgorged and bloated purse
The wealth of Indian provinces, escapes.
Nor is it well, nor can it come to good,
That, through profane and infidel contempt
Of holy writ, she has presumed t' annul
And abrogate, as roundly as she may,
The total ordinance and will of God·
Advancing Fashion to the post of Truth,
And centring all authority in modes
And customs of her own, till sabbath rites
Have dwindled into unrespected forms,
And knees and hassocks are well-nigh divorced.
God made the country, and man made the town.
What wonder then that health and virtue, gifts
That can alone make sweet the bitter draught
That life holds out to all, should most abound
And least be threatened in the fields and groves?
Possess ye therefore, ye who, borne about
In chariots and sedans, know no fatigue
But that of idleness, and taste no scenes
But such as art contrives, possess ye still
Your element; there only can ye shine;
There only minds like yours can do no harm.
Our groves were planted to console at noon
The pensive wanderer in their shades. At eve
The moonbeam, sliding softly in between
The sleeping leaves, is all the light they wish,
Birds warbling all the music. We can spare
The splendour of your lamps; they but eclipse
Our softer satellite. Your songs confound
Our more harmonious notes; the thrush departs
Scared, and the offended nightingale is mute.
There is a public mischief in your mirth;
It plagues your country. Folly such as yours,
Graced with a sword, and worthier of a fan,
Has made, what enemies could ne'er have done,
Our arch of empire, steadfast but for you,
A mutilated structure, soon to fall.

The Task.

BOOK II.

THE TIME-PIECE.

ARGUMENT.

Reflections suggested by the conclusion of the former book.—Peace among the nations recommended, on the ground of their common fellowship in sorrow.—Prodigies enumerated.—Sicilian Earthquakes.—Man rendered obnoxious to these calamities by sin.—God the agent in them.—The philosophy that stops at secondary causes reproved.—Our own late miscarriages accounted for.—Satirical notice taken of our trips to Fontainbleau.—But the pulpit, not satire, the proper engine of reformation.—The Reverend Advertiser of engraved sermons.—Petit-maître parson.—The good preacher.—Picture of a theatrical clerical coxcomb.—Story-tellers and jesters in the pulpit reproved.—Apostrophe to popular applause.—Retailers of ancient philosophy expostulated with.—Sum of the whole matter.—Effects of sacerdotal mismanagement on the laity.—Their folly and extravagance.—The mischiefs of profusion.—Profusion itself, with all its consequent evils, ascribed, as to its principal cause, to the want of discipline in the universities.

O FOR a lodge in some vast wilderness,
Some boundless contiguity of shade,
Where rumour of oppression and deceit,
Of unsuccessful or successful war,
Might never reach me more. My ear is pained,
My soul is sick with every day's report

Of wrong and outrage with which earth is filled.
There is no flesh in man's obdurate heart,
It does not feel for man; the natural bond
Of brotherhood is severed as the flax,
That falls asunder at the touch of fire.
He finds his fellow guilty of a skin
Not coloured like his own; and having power
T' enforce the wrong, for such a worthy cause
Dooms and devotes him as his lawful prey.
Lands intersected by a narrow frith
Abhor each other. Mountains interposed
Make enemies of nations, who had else
Like kindred drops been mingled into one.
Thus man devotes his brother, and destroys;
And, worse than all, and most to be deplored
As human nature's broadest, foulest blot,
Chains him, and tasks him, and exacts his sweat
With stripes, that mercy with a bleeding heart
Weeps when she sees inflicted on a beast.
Then what is man? And what man, seeing this,
And having human feelings, does not blush,
And hang his head, to think himself a man?
I would not have a slave to till my ground,
To carry me, to fan me while I sleep,
And tremble when I wake, for all the wealth
That sinews bought and sold have ever earned.
No: dear as freedom is, and in my heart's
Just estimation prized above all price,
I had much rather be myself the slave,
And wear the bonds, than fasten them on him.
We have no slaves at home—then why abroad?
And they themselves once ferried o'er the wave
That parts us, are emancipate and loosed.
Slaves can not breathe in England: if their lungs
Receive our air, that moment they are free;
They touch our country, and their shackles fall.
That's noble, and bespeaks a nation proud
And jealous of the blessing. Spread it then,
And let it circulate through every vain
Of all your empire; that, where Briton's power
Is felt, mankind may feel her mercy too.
Sure there is need of social intercourse,
Benevolence, and peace, and mutual aid,
Between the nations in a world, that seems
To toll the death bell of its own decease,
And by the voice of all its elements
To preach the general doom.* When were the winds
Let slip with such a warrant to destroy?
When did the waves so haughtily o'erleap
Their ancient barriers, deluging the dry?
Fires from beneath, and meteors† from above,
Portentous, unexampled, unexplained,
Have kindled beacons in the skies; and th' old
And crazy earth has had her shaking fits
More frequent, and foregone her usual rest.
Is it a time to wrangle, when the props
And pillars of our planet seem to fail,
And Nature* with a dim and sickly eye
To wait the close of all? But grant her end
More distant, and that prophecy demands
A longer respite, unaccomplished yet;
Still they are frowning signals, and bespeak
Displeasure in his breast, who smites the earth
Or heals it, makes it languish or rejoice.
And 'tis but seemly, that, where all deserve
And stand exposed by common peccancy,
To what no few have felt, there should be peace,
And brethren in calamity should love.
Alas for Sicily! rude fragments now
Lie scattered, where the shapely column stood.
Her palaces are dust. In all her streets
The voice of singing and the sprightly chord
Are silent. Revelry, and dance, and show,
Suffer a syncope and a solemn pause;
While God performs upon the trembling stage
Of his own works his dreadful part alone.
How does the earth receive him?—with what signs
Of gratulation and delight her king?
Pours she not all her choicest fruits abroad,
Her sweetest flowers, her aromatic gums,
Disclosing Paradise where'er he treads?
She quakes at his approach. Her hollow womb,
Conceiving thunders, through a thousand deeps
And fiery caverns, roars beneath his foot.
The hills move lightly, and the mountains smoke,
For he has touched them. From the extremest point
Of elevation down into the abyss
His wrath is busy, and his frown is felt.
The rocks fall headlong, and the valleys rise,
The rivers die into offensive pools,
And charged with putrid verdure, breathe a gross
And mortal nuisance into all the air.
What solid was, by transformation strange,
Grows fluid; and the fixed and rooted earth,
Tormented into billows, heaves and swells,
Or with vortiginous and hideous whirl
Sucks down its prey insatiable. Immense
The tumult and the overthrow, the pangs
And agonies of human and of brute
Multitudes, fugitive on every side,
And fugitive in vain. The sylvan scene
Migrates uplifted: and, with all its soil
Alighting in far distant fields, finds out
A new possessor, and survives the change.
Ocean has caught the frenzy, and, upwrought
To an enormous and o'erbearing height.
Not by a mighty wind, but by that voice,
Which winds and waves obey, invades the shore
Resistless. Never such a sudden flood,
Upridged so high, and sent on such a charge,
Possessed an inland scene. Where now the throng,
That pressed the beach, and, hasty to depart,

* Alluding to the calamities in Jamaica.
† August 18, 1783.

* Alluding to the fog, that covered both Europe and Asia during the whole summer of 1783.

Looked to the sea for safety? They are gone,
Gone with the refluent wave into the deep—
A prince with half his people! Ancient towers,
And roofs embattled high, the gloomy scenes,
Where beauty oft and lettered worth consume
Life in the unproductive shades of death,
Fall prone: the pale inhabitants come forth,
And, happy in their unforeseen release
From all the rigours of restraint, enjoy
The terrors of the day, that sets them free.
Who then, that has thee, would not hold thee fast,
Freedom? whom they that lose thee so regret,
That e'en a judgment, making way for thee,
Seems in their eyes a mercy for thy sake.
Such evils Sin hath wrought; and such a flame
Kindled in Heaven, that it burns down to Earth,
And in the furious inquest that it makes
On God's behalf, lays waste his fairest works.
The very elements, though each be meant
The minister of man, to serve his wants,
Conspire against him. With his breath he draws
A plague into his blood; and can not use
Life's necessary means, but he must die.
Storms rise t' o'erwhelm him: or, if stormy winds
Rise not, the waters of the deep shall rise,
And, needing none assistance of the storm,
Shall roll themselves ashore, and reach him there.
The earth shall shake him out of all his holds,
Or make his house his grave; nor so content,
Shall counterfeit the motions of the flood,
And drown him in her dry and dusty gulfs.
What then!—were they the wicked above all,
And we the righteous, whose fast anchored isle
Moved not, while theirs was rocked, like a light skiff,
The sport of every wave? No: none are clear,
And none than we more guilty. But, where all
Stand chargeable with guilt, and to the shafts
Of wrath obnoxious, God may choose his mark:
May punish, if he please, the less, to warn
The more malignant. If he spared not them,
Tremble and be amazed at thine escape,
Far guiltier England, lest he spare not thee!
Happy the man, who sees a God employed
In all the good and ill that checker life!
Resolving all events, with their effects
And manifold results, into the will
And arbitration wise of the Supreme.
Did not his eye rule all things, and intend
The least of our concerns (since from the least
The greatest oft originate;) could chance
Find place in his dominion, or dispose
One lawless particle to thwart his plan;
Then God might be surprised, and unforeseen
Contingence might alarm him, and disturb
The smooth and equal course of his affairs.
This truth Philosophy, though eagle-eyed
In nature's tendencies, oft overlooks;
And, having found his instrument, forgets,
Or disregards, or, more presumptuous still,
Denies the power that wields it. God proclaims
His hot displeasure against foolish men,
That live an atheist life; involves the Heaven
In tempests; quits his grasp upon the winds,
And gives them all their fury; bids a plague
Kindle a fiery bile upon the skin,
And putrefy the breath of blooming Health.
He calls for Famine, and the meagre fiend
Blows mildew from between his shrivelled lips,
And taints the golden ear. He springs his mines,
And desolates a nation at a blast.
Forth steps the spruce philosopher, and tells
Of homogeneal and discordant springs
And principles; of causes, how they work
By necessary laws their sure effects;
Of action and re-action: he has found
The source of the disease, that nature feels,
And bids the world take heart and banish fear.
Thou fool! will thy discovery of the cause
Suspend th' effect, or heal it? Has not God
Still wrought by means since first he made the world?
And did he not of old employ his means
To drown it? What is his creation less
Than a capacious reservoir of means
Formed for his use, and ready at his will?
Go, dress thine eye with eye-salve; ask of him,
Or ask of whomsoever he has taught;
And learn, though late, the genuine cause of all.
England, with all thy faults, I love thee still—
My country! and while yet a nook is left,
Where English minds and manners may be found,
Shall be constrained to love thee. Though thy clime
Be fickle, and thy year most part deformed
With dripping rains, or withered by a frost,
I would not yet exchange thy sullen skies,
And fields without a flower, for warmer France
With all her vines; nor for Ausonia's groves
Of golden fruitage, and her myrtle bowers.
To shake thy senate, and from heights sublime
Of patriot eloquence to flash down fire
Upon thy foes, was never meant my task:
But I can feel thy fortunes, and partake
Thy joys and sorrows, with as true a heart
As any thunderer there. And I can feel
Thy follies too; and with a just disdain
Frown at effeminates, whose very looks
Reflect dishonour on the land I love.
How, in the name of soldiership and sense,
Should England prosper, when such things, as smooth
And tender as a girl, all essenced o'er
With odours, and as profligate as sweet;
Who sell their laurel for a myrtle wreath,
And love when they should fight; when such as these
Presume to lay their hands upon the ark
Of her magnificent and awful cause?

Time was when it was praise and boast enough
In every clime, and travel where we might,
That we were born her children. Praise enough
To fill th' ambition of a private man,
That Chatham's language was his mother tongue,
And Wolfe's great name compatriot with his own.
Farewell those honours, and farewell with them
The hope of such hereafter! They have fallen
Each in his field of glory; one in arms,
And one in council—Wolfe upon the lap
Of smiling Victory that moment won,
And Chatham heart-sick of his country's shame!
They made us many soldiers. Chatham, still
Consulting England's happiness at home,
Secured it by an unforgiving frown,
If any wronged her. Wolfe, where'er he fought,
Put so much of his heart into his act,
That his example had a magnet's force,
And all were swift to follow whom all loved.
Those suns are set. O rise some other such!
Or all that we have left is empty talk
Of old achievements, and despair of new.
Now hoist the sail, and let the streamers float
Upon the wanton breezes. Strew the deck
With lavender, and sprinkle liquid sweets,
That no rude savour maritime invade
The nose of nice nobility! Breathe soft
Ye clarionets, and softer still ye flutes;
That winds and waters, lulled by magic sounds,
May bear us smoothly to the Gallic shore!
True; we have lost an empire—let it pass.
True; we may thank the perfidy of France,
That picked the jewel out of England's crown,
With all the cunning of an envious shrew.
And let that pass—'twas but a trick of state
A brave man knows no malice, but at once
Forgets in peace the injuries of war,
And gives his direst foe a friend's embrace.
And, shamed as we have been, to th' very beard
Braved and defied, and in our own sea proved
Too weak for those decisive blows, that once
Ensured us mastery there, we yet retain
Some small pre-eminence; we justly boast
At least superior jockeyship, and claim
The honours of the turf as all our own!
Go then, well worthy of the praise ye seek,
And show the shame, ye might conceal at home,
In foreign eyes!—Be grooms and win the plate,
Where once your noble fathers won a crown!—
'Tis generous to communicate your skill
To those that need it. Folly is soon learned:
And under such preceptors who can fail!
There is a pleasure in poetic pains,
Which only poets know. The shifts and turns,
Th' expedients and inventions multiform,
To which the mind resorts, in chase of terms
Though apt, yet coy, and difficult to win—
T' arrest the fleeting images, that fill
The mirror of the mind, and hold them fast,
And force them sit till he has pencilled off
A faithful likeness of the forms he views;
Then to dispose his copies with such art,
That each may find its most propitious light,
And shine by situation, hardly less
Than by the labour and the skill it cost;
Are occupations of the poet's mind
So pleasing, and that steal away the thought
With such address from themes of sad import,
That, lost in his own musings, happy man!
He feels th' anxieties of life, denied
Their wonted entertainment, all retire.
Such joys has he that sings. But ah! not such,
Or seldom such, the hearers of his song.
Fastidious, or else listless, or perhaps
Aware of nothing arduous in a task
They never undertook, they little note
His dangers or escapes, and haply find
Their least amusement where he found the most.
But is amusement all? Studious of song,
And yet ambitious not to sing in vain,
I would not trifle merely, though the world
Be loudest in their praise, who do no more.
Yet what can satire, whether grave or gay?
It may correct a foible, may chastise
The freaks of fashion, regulate the dress,
Retrench a sword-blade, or displace a patch;
But where are its sublimer trophies found?
What vice has it subdued? whose heart reclaimed
By rigour, or whom laughed into reform?
Alas! Leviathan is not so tamed;
Laughed at he laughs again; and stricken hard,
Turns to his stroke his adamantine scales,
That fear no discipline of human hands.

The pulpit, therefore, (and I name it filled
With solemn awe, that bids me well beware
With what intent I touch that holy thing)—
The pulpit (when the satirist has at last,
Strutting and vapouring in an empty school,
Spent all his force and made no proselyte)—
I say the pulpit (in the sober use
Of its legitimate, peculiar powers)
Must stand acknowledged, while the world shall stand,
The most important and effectual guard,
Support, and ornament of Virtue's cause.
There stands the messenger of truth: there stands
The legate of the skies!—His theme divine,
His office sacred, his credentials clear.
By him the violated law speaks out
Its thunders; and by him in strains as sweet
As angels use, the Gospel whispers peace.
He establishes the strong, restores the weak,
Reclaims the wanderer, binds the broken heart,
And, armed himself in panoply complete
Of heavenly temper, furnishes with arms
Bright as his own, and trains, by every rule
Of holy discipline, to glorious war,

The sacramental host of God's elect!
Are all such teachers?—would to Heaven all were!
But hark—the doctor's voice!—fast wedged between
Two empirics he stands, and with swoln cheeks
Inspires the news, his trumpet. Keener far
Than all invective is his bold harangue.
While through that public organ of report
He hails the clergy; and, defying shame,
Announces to the world his own and theirs!
He teaches those to read, whom schools dismissed,
And colleges, untaught; sells accent, tone,
And emphasis in score, and gives to prayer
The *adagio* and *andante* it demands.
He grinds divinity of other days
Down into modern use; transforms old print
To zigzag manuscript, and cheats the eyes
Of gallery critics by a thousand arts.
Are there who purchase of the doctor's ware?
O, name it not in Gath!—it can not be,
That grave and learned clerks should need such aid.
He doubtless is in sport, and does but droll,
Assuming thus a rank unknown before—
Grand caterer and dry-nurse of the church!

I venerate the man, whose heart is warm,
Whose hands are pure, whose doctrine and whose life,
Coincident, exhibit lucid proof
That he is honest in the sacred cause,
To such I render more than mere respect,
Whose actions say, that they respect themselves.
But loose in morals, and in manners vain,
In conversation frivolous, in dress
Extreme, at once rapacious and profuse;
Frequent in park with lady at his side,
Ambling and prattling scandal as he goes;
But rare at home, and never at his books,
Or with his pen, save when he scrawls a card;
Constant at routs, familiar with a round
Of ladyships, a stranger to the poor;
Ambitious of preferment for its gold,
And well-prepared, by ignorance and sloth,
By infidelity and love of world,
To make God's work a sinecure; a slave
To his own pleasures and his patron's pride;
From such apostles, O ye mitred heads,
Preserve the church! and lay not careless hands
On sculls, that can not teach, and will not learn.

Would I describe a preacher, such as Paul,
Were he on earth, would hear, approve, and own,
Paul should himself direct me. I would trace
His master-strokes, and draw from his design.
I would express him simple, grave, sincere;
In doctrine uncorrupt; in language plain,
And plain in manner; decent, solemn, chaste,
And natural in gesture; much impressed
Himself, as conscious of his awful charge,
And anxious mainly that the flock he feeds
May feel it too; affectionate in look,
And tender in address, as well becomes
A messenger of grace to guilty men.
Behold the picture!—Is it like?—Like whom?
The things that mount the rostrum with a skip,
And then skip down again; pronounce a text;
Cry—hem; and reading what they never wrote,
Just fifteen minutes, huddle up their work,
And with a well-bred whisper close the scene!

In man or woman, but far most in man,
And most of all in man that ministers
And serves the altar, in my soul I loathe
All affectation. 'Tis my perfect scorn;
Object of my implacable disgust.
What!—will a man play tricks, will he indulge
A silly fond conceit of his fair form,
And just proportion, fashionable mien,
And pretty face, in presence of his God?
Or will he seek to dazzle me with tropes,
As with the diamond on his lily hand,
And play his brilliant parts before my eyes,
When I am hungry for the bread of life?
He mocks his Maker, prostitutes and shames
His noble office, and, instead of truth,
Displaying his own beauty, starves his flock.
Therefore avaunt all attitude, and stare,
And start theatric, practised at the glass!
I seek divine simplicity in him,
Who handles things divine; and all besides,
Though learned with labour, and though much admired
By curious eyes and judgments ill-informed,
To me is odious as the nasal twang
Heard at conventicle, where worthy men,
Misled by custom, strain celestial themes
Through the pressed nostril, spectacle bestrid.
Some decent in demeanour while they preach,
That task performed, relapse into themselves;
And having spoken wisely, at the close
Grow wanton, and give proof to every eye,
Whoe'er was edified, themselves were not!
Forth comes the pocket mirror—First we stroke
An eyebrow; next compose a straggling lock;
Then with an air most gracefully performed,
Fall back into our seat, extend an arm,
And lay it at its ease with gentle care,
With handkerchief in hand depending low:
The better hand more busy gives the nose
Its bergamot, or aids the indebted eye
With opera glass, to watch the moving scene,
And recognise the slow-retiring fair.—
Now this is fulsome, and offends me more
Than in a churchman slovenly neglect
And rustic coarseness would. A heavenly mind
May be indifferent to her house of clay,
And slight the hovel as beneath her care;
But how a body so fantastic, trim,
And quaint, in its deportment and attire,
Can lodge a heavenly mind—demands a doubt.

He, that negotiates between God and man,
As God's ambassador, the grand concerns

Of judgment and of mercy, should beware
Of lightness in his speech. 'Tis pitiful
To court a grin, when you should woo a soul;
To break a jest, when pity would inspire
Pathetic exhortation; and t' address
The skittish fancy with facetious tales,
When sent with God's commission to the heart!
So did not Paul. Direct me to a quip
Or merry turn in all he ever wrote,
And I consent you take it for your text,
Your only one, till sides and benches fail.
No: he was serious in a serious cause,
And understood too well the weighty terms,
That he had taken in charge. He would not stoop
To conquer those by jocular exploits,
Whom truth and soberness assailed in vain.
O Popular Applause! what heart of man
Is proof against thy sweet seducing charms?
The wisest and the best feel urgent need
Of all their caution in thy gentlest gales;
But swelled into a gust—Who then, alas!
With all his canvass set, and inexpert,
And therefore heedless, can withstand thy power?
Praise from the rivelled lips of toothless, bald
Decreptitude, and in the looks of lean
And craving Poverty, and in the bow
Respectful of the smutched artificer,
Is oft too welcome, and may much disturb
The bias of the purpose. How much more,
Poured forth by beauty splendid and polite,
In language soft as Adoration breathes?
Ah spare your idol! think him human still.
Charms he may have, but he has frailties too!
Dote not too much, nor spoil what ye admire.
All truth is from the sempiternal source
Of light divine. But Egypt, Greece and Rome,
Drew from the stream below. More favoured we
Drink, when we choose it, at the fountain head.
To them it flowed much mingled and defiled
With hurtful error, prejudice and dreams
Illusive of philosophy, so called,
But falsely. Sages after sages strove
In vain to filter off a crystal draught
Pure from the lees, which often more enhanced
The thirst than slaked it, and not seldom bred
Intoxication and delirium wild.
In vain they pushed inquiry to the birth
And spring time of the world; asked, Whence is man?
Why formed at all? and wherefore as he is?
Where must he find his Maker? with what rites
Adore him? Will he hear, accept, and bless?
Or does he sit regardless of his works?
Has man within him an immortal seed?
Or does the tomb take all? If he survive
His ashes, where? and in what weal or wo?
Knots worthy of solution, which alone
A Deity could solve. Their answers, vague
And all at random, fabulous and dark,
Left them as dark themselves. Their rules of life,
Defective and unsanctioned, proved too weak
To bind the roving appetite, and lead
Blind nature to a God not yet revealed.
'Tis Revelation satisfies all doubts,
Explains all mysteries, except her own,
And so illuminates the path of life,
That fools discover it, and stray no more.
Now tell me, dignified and sapient sir,
My man of morals, nurtured in the shades
Of Academus—is this false or true?
Is Christ the abler teacher, or the schools?
If Christ, then why resort at every turn
To Athens or to Rome, for wisdom short
Of man's occasions, when in him reside
Grace, knowledge, comfort—an unfathomed store?
How oft, when Paul has served us with a text,
Has Epictetus, Plato, Tully, preached!
Men that, if now alive, would sit content
And humble learners of a Saviour's worth,
Preach it who might. Such was their love of truth,
Their thirst of knowledge, and their candour too!
And thus it is—The pastor, either vain
By nature, or by flattery made so, taught
To gaze at his own splendour, and t' exalt
Absurdly, not his office, but himself;
Or unenlightened, and too proud to learn;
Or vicious, and not therefore apt to teach;
Perverting often by the stress of lewd
And loose example, whom he should instruct
Exposes, and holds up to broad disgrace
The noblest function, and discredits much
The brightest truths that man has ever seen.
For ghostly counsel; if it either fall
Below the exigence, or be not backed
With show of love, at least with hopeful proof
Of some sincerity on the giver's part;
Or be dishonoured in th' exterior form
And mode of its conveyance by such tricks
As move derision, or by foppish airs
And histrionic mummery, that let down
The pulpit to the level of the stage;
Drops from the lips a disregarded thing.
The weak perhaps are moved, but are not taught,
While prejudice in men of stronger minds
Takes deeper root, confirmed by what they see.
A relaxation of religion's hold
Upon the roving and untutored heart,
Soon follows, and, the curb of conscience snapped,
The laity run wild—But do they now?
Note their extravagance, and be convinced.
As nations, ignorant of God, contrive
A wooden one; so we, no longer taught
By monitors that mother church supplies,
Now make our own. Posterity will ask
(If e'er posterity see verse of mine)
Some fifty or a hundred lustrums hence,
What was a monitor in George's days?

My very gentle reader, yet unborn,
Of whom I needs must augur better things.
Since Heaven would sure grow weary of a world
Productive only of a race like ours,
A monitor is wood—plank shaven thin.
We wear it at our backs. There, closely braced
And neatly fitted, it compresses hard
The prominent and most unsightly bones,
And binds the shoulders flat. We prove its use
Sovereign and most effectual to secure
A form, not now gymnastic as of yore,
From rickets and distortion, else our lot.
But thus admonished, we can walk erect—
One proof at least of manhood! while the friend
Sticks close, a Mentor worthy of his charge.
Our habits, costlier than Lucullus wore,
And by caprice as multiplied as his,
Just please us while the fashion is at full,
But change with every moon. The sycophant,
Who waits to dress us, arbitrates their date;
Surveys his fair reversion with keen eye;
Finds one ill made, another obsolete,
This fits not nicely, that is ill conceived;
And, making prize of all that he condemns,
With our expenditure defrays his own.
Variety's the very spice of life,
That gives it all its flavour. We have run
Through every change, that Fancy, at the loom
Exhausted, has had genius to supply;
And studious of mutation still, discard
A real elegance, a little used,
For monstrous novelty, and strange disguise.
We sacrifice to dress, till household joys
And comfort cease. Dress drains our cellar dry,
And keeps our larder lean; puts out our fires;
And introduces hunger, frost, and woe,
Where peace and hospitality might reign.
What man that lives, and that knows how to live,
Would fail t' exhibit at the public shows
A form as splendid as the proudest there,
Though appetite raise outcries at the cost?
A man o' th' town dines late, but soon enough
With reasonable forecast and despatch,
T' ensure a side-box station at half-price.
You think, perhaps, so delicate his dress,
His daily fare as delicate. Alas!
He picks clean teeth, and busy as he seems
With an old tavern quill, is hungry yet!
The rout is Folly's circle, which he draws
With magic wand. So potent is the spell,
That none, decoyed into that fatal ring,
Unless by Heaven's peculiar grace, escape.
There we grow early gray, but never wise;
There form connexions, but acquire no friend;
Solicit pleasure hopeless of success;
Waste youth in occupations only fit
For second childhood, and devote old age
To sports, which only childhood could excuse;
There they are happiest, who dissemble best
Their weariness; and they the most polite,
Who squander time and treasure with a smile,
Though at their own destruction. She that asks
Her dear five hundred friends contemns them all,
And hates their coming. They (what can they less?)
Make just reprisals; and, with cringe and shrug,
And bow obsequious, hide their hate of her.
All catch the frenzy, downward from her grace,
Whose flambeaux flash against the morning skies,
And gild our chamber ceiling as they pass,
To her, who, frugal only that her thrift
May feed excesses she can ill afford,
Is hackneyed home unlackeyed; who, in haste
Alighting, turns the key in her own door,
And, at the watchman's lantern borrowing light,
Finds a cold bed her only comfort left.
Wives beggar husbands, husbands starve their wives,
On Fortune's velvet altar offering up
Their last poor pittance.—Fortune, most severe
Of Goddesses yet known, and costlier far
Than all, that held their routs in Juno's heaven.
So fare we in this prison-house the World;
And 'tis a fearful spectacle to see
So many maniacs dancing in their chains.
They gaze upon the links, that hold them fast,
With eyes of anguish, execrate their lot,
Then shake them in despair, and dance again!
Now basket up the family of plagues,
That wastes our vitals; peculation, sale
Of honour, perjury, corruption, frauds
By forgery, by subterfuge of law,
By tricks and lies as numerous and as keen
As the necessities their authors feel;
Then cast them, closely bundled, every brat
At the right door. Profusion is the sire.
Profusion unrestrained, with all that's base
In character, has littered all the land,
And bred, within the memory of no few,
A priesthood, such as Baal's was of old,
A people, such as never was till now.
It is a hungry vice:—it eats up all
That gives society its beauty, strength,
Convenience, and security, and use:
Makes men mere vermin, worthy to be trapped
And gibbeted, as fast as catchpole claws
Can seize the slippery prey: unties the knot
Of union, and converts the sacred band,
That holds mankind together, to a scourge.
Profusion, deluging a state with lusts
Of grossest nature and of worst effects,
Prepares it for its ruin: hardens, blinds,
And warps the consciences of public men,
Till they can laugh at Virtue; mock the fools
That trust them; and in the end disclose a face,
That would have shocked Credulity herself,
Unmasked, vouchsafing their sole excuse—
Since all alike are selfish, why not they?

This does Profusion, and the accursed cause
Of such deep mischief has itself a cause.
In colleges and halls in ancient days,
When learning, virtue, piety and truth,
Were precious, and inculcated with care,
There dwelt a sage called Discipline. His head,
Not yet by time completely silvered o'er,
Bespoke him past the bounds of freakish youth,
But strong for service still, and unimpaired.
His eye was meek and gentle, and a smile
Played on his lips; and in his speech was heard
Paternal sweetness, dignity and love.
The occupation dearest to his heart
Was to encourage goodness. He would stroke
The head of modest and ingenuous worth,
That blushed at its own praise; and press the youth
Close to his side, that pleased him. Learning grew
Beneath his care a thriving vigorous plant;
The mind was well informed, the passions held
Subordinate, and diligence was choice.
If e'er it chanced, as sometimes chance it must,
That one among so many overleaped
The limits of control, his gentle eye
Grew stern, and darted a severe rebuke:
His frown was full of terror, and his voice
Shook the delinquent with such fits of awe,
As left him not, till penitence had won
Lost favour back again, and closed the breach.
But Discipline, a faithful servant long;
Declined at length into the vale of years:
A palsy struck his arm; his sparkling eye
Was quenched in rheums of age; his voice unstrung,
Grew tremulous, and drew derision more
Than reverence in perverse, rebellious youth.
So colleges and halls neglected much
Their good old friend; and Discipline at length,
O'erlooked and unemployed, fell sick and died.
Then Study languished, Emulation slept,
And Virtue fled. The schools became a scene
Of solemn farce, where Ignorance in stilts,
His cap well lined with logic not his own,
With parrot tongue performed the scholar's part,
Proceeding soon a graduated dunce.
Then compromise had place, and scrutiny
Became stone blind; precedence went in truck;
And he was competent whose purse was so.
A dissolution of all bonds ensued;
The curbs invented for the mulish mouth,
Of headstrong youth were broken; bars and bolts
Grew rusty by disuse; and massy gates
Forgot their office, opening with a touch;
Till gowns at length are found mere masquerade,
The tasselled cap and the spruce band a jest,
A mockery of the world! What need of these
For gamesters, jockeys, brothellers impure,
Spendthrifts, and booted sportsmen oftener seen
With belted waist and pointers at their heels,
Than in the bounds of duty? What was learned,
If aught was learned in childhood, is forgot;
And such expense, as pinches parents blue,
And mortifies the liberal hand of love,
Is squandered in pursuit of idle sports
And vicious pleasure; buys the boy a name,
That sits a stigma on his father's house,
And cleaves through life inseparably close
To him that wears it. What can after-games
Of riper joys, and commerce with the world,
The lewd vain world, that must receive him soon,
Add to such erudition, thus acquired,
Where science and where virtue are professed?
They may confirm his habits, rivet fast
His folly, but to spoil him is a task,
That bids defiance to th' united powers
Of fashion, dissipation, taverns, stews.
Now blame we most the nursling or the nurse?
The children crooked, twisted, and deformed,
Through want of care; or her, whose winking eye,
And slumbering oscitancy mars the brood?
The nurse no doubt. Regardless of her charge,
She needs herself correction; needs to learn,
That it is dangerous sporting with the world,
With things so sacred as the nation's trust,
The nurture of her youth, her dearest pledge.
All are not such. I had a brother once
Peace to the memory of a man of worth,
A man of letters, and of manners too!
Of manners sweet as Virtue always wears,
When gay Good-nature dresses her in smiles.
He graced a college,* in which order yet
Was sacred; and was honoured, loved, and wept,
By more than one, themselves conspicuous there.
Some minds are tempered happily, and mixed
With such ingredients of good sense, and taste
Of what is excellent in man, they thirst
With such a zeal to be what they approve,
That no restraints can circumscribe them more
Than they themselves by choice, for wisdom's sake.
Nor can example hurt them: what they see
Of vice in others but enhancing more
The charms of virtue in their just esteem.
If such escape contagion, and emerge
Pure from so foul a pool to shine abroad,
And give the world their talents and themselves,
Small thanks to those whose negligence or sloth
Exposed their inexperience to the snare,
And left them to an undirected choice.
See then the quiver broken and decayed,
In which are kept our arrows! Rusting there
In wild disorder, and unfit for use,
What wonder if, discharged into the world,
They shame their shooters with a random flight,
Their points obtuse, and feathers drunk with wine!
Well may the church wage unsuccessful war

* Bene't Coll. Cambridge.

With such artillery armed. Vice parries wide
Th' undreaded volley with a sword of straw,
And stands an impudent and fearless mark.

Have we not tracked the felon home, and found
His birth-place and his dam? The country mourns,
Mourns because every plague, that can infest
Society, and that saps and worms the base
Of th' edifice, that Policy has raised,
Swarms in all quarters: meets the eye, the ear,
And suffocates the breath at every turn,
Profusion breeds them; and the cause itself
Of that calamitous mischief has been found:
Found too where most offensive, in the skirts
Of the robed pedagogue! Else let th' arraigned
Stand up unconscious, and refute the charge.
So when the Jewish leader stretched his arm,
And waved his rod divine, a race obscene,
Spawned in the muddy beds of Nile, came forth,
Polluting Egypt: gardens, fields, and plains,
Were covered with the pest; the streets were filled;
The croaking nuisance lurked in every nook;
Nor palaces, nor even chambers, 'scaped;
And the land stank—so numerous was the fry.

The Task.

BOOK III.

THE GARDEN.

ARGUMENT.

Self-recollection and reproof.—Address to domestic happiness.—Some account of myself.—The vanity of many of their pursuits who are reputed wise.—Justification of my censures.—Divine illumination necessary to the most expert philosopher.—The question, What is truth? answered by other questions.—Domestic happiness addressed again.—Few lovers of the country.—My tame hare.—Occupations of a retired gentleman in his garden.—Pruning.—Framing.—Green-house.—Sowing of flower-seeds.—The country preferable to the town even in winter.—Reasons why it is deserted at that season.—Ruinous effects of gaming, and of expensive improvement.—Book concludes with an apostrophe to the metropolis.

As one, who long in thickets and in brakes
Entangled, winds now this way and now that
His devious course uncertain, seeking home;
Or, having long in miry ways been foiled
And sore discomfited, from slough to slough
Plunging, and half despairing of escape;
If chance at length he find a greensward smooth
And faithful to the foot, his spirits rise,
He chirups brisk his ear-erecting steed,
And winds his way with pleasure and with ease;
So I, designing other themes, and called
T' adorn the Sofa with eulogium due,
To tell its slumbers, and to paint its dreams,
Have rambled wide: in country, city, seat
Of academic fame (howe'er deserved,)
Long held, and scarcely disengaged at last.
But now with pleasant pace a cleanlier road
I mean to tread: I feel myself at large.
Courageous and refreshed for future toil,
If toil await me, or if dangers new.
Since pulpits fail, and sounding boards reflect
Most part an empty, ineffectual sound,
What chance that I, to fame so little known,
Nor conversant with men or manners much,
Should speak to purpose, or with better hope
Crack the satiric thong? 'Twere wiser far
For me, enamoured of sequestered scenes,
And charmed with rural beauty, to repose,
Where chance may throw me, beneath elm or vine,
My languid limbs, when summer seers the plains,
Or, when rough winter rages, on the soft
And sheltered Sofa, while the nitrous air
Feeds a blue flame, and makes a cheerful hearth
There, undisturbed by Folly, and apprised
How great the danger of dirturbing her,
To muse in silence, or, at least, confine
Remarks, that gall so many, to the few
My partners in retreat. Disgust concealed
Is ofttimes proof of wisdom, when the fault
Is obstinate, and cure beyond our reach
Domestic happiness, thou only bliss
Of Paradise, that has survived the fall!
Though few now taste thee unimpaired and pure,
Or tasting long enjoy thee! too infirm,
Or too incautious to preserve thy sweets
Unmixed with drops of bitter, which neglect
Or temper sheds into thy crystal cup;
Thou art the nurse of Virtue, in thine arms
She smiles, appearing, as in truth she is,
Heaven-born, and destined to the skies again.
Thou art not known where Pleasure is adored,
That reeling goddess with the zoneless waist
And wandering eyes, still leaning on the arm
Of Novelty, her fickle, frail support;
For thou art meek and constant, hating change
And finding in the calm of truth-tried love
Joys that her stormy raptures never yield.
Forsaking thee what shipwreck have we made
Of honour, dignity and fair renown!
Till prostitution elbows us aside
In all our crowded streets; and senates seem

Convened for purposes of empire less,
Than to release the adulteress from her bond.
Th' adulteress! what a theme for angry verse!
What provocation to the indignant heart,
That feels for injured love! but I disdain
The nauseous task to paint her as she is,
Cruel, abandoned, glorying in her shame!
No: let her pass, and, charioted along
In guilty splendour, shake the public ways;
The frequency of crimes has washed them white.
And verse of mine shall never brand the wretch
Whom matrons now, of character unsmirched,
And chaste themselves, are not ashamed to own.
Virtue and vice had boundaries in old time,
Not to be passed: and she, that had renounced
Her sex's honour, was renounced herself
By all that prized it; not for prudery's sake,
But dignity's, resentful of the wrong.
'Twas hard perhaps on here and there a waif,
Desirous to return, and not received;
But 'twas a wholesome rigour in the main,
And taught th' unblemished to preserve with care
That purity, whose loss was loss of all.
Men too were nice in honour in those days,
And judged offenders well. Then he that sharped,
And pocketed a prize by fraud obtained,
Was marked and shunned as odious. He that sold
His country, or was slack when she required
His every nerve in action and at stretch,
Paid with the blood that he had basely spared,
The price of his default. But now—yes, now
We are become so candid and so fair,
So liberal in construction, and so rich
In Christian charity, (good natured age!)
That they are safe, sinners of either sex,
Transgress what laws they may. Well dressed, well bred,
Well equipaged, is ticket good enough
To pass as readily through every door.
Hypocrisy, detest her as we may,
(And no man's hatred ever wronged her yet)
May claim this merit still—that she admits
The worth of what she mimics with such care
And thus gives virtue indirect applause;
But she has burnt her mask, not needed here,
Where vice has such allowance, that her shifts
And specious semblances have lost their use.

I was a stricken deer, that left the herd
Long since. With many an arrow deep infixed
My panting side was charged, when I withdrew
To seek a tranquil death in distant shades,
There was I found by one who had himself
Been hurt by th' archers. In his side he bore,
And in his hands and feet the cruel scars.
With gentle force soliciting the darts,
He drew them forth, and healed, and bade me live.
Since then, with few associates, in remote
And silent woods I wander, far from those
My former partners of the peopled scene;
With few associates, and not wishing more.
Here much I ruminate, as much I may,
With other views of men and manners now
Than once, and others of a life to come.
I see that all are wanderers, gone astray
Each in his own delusions; they are lost
In chase of fancied happiness, still wooed
And never won. Dream after dream ensues;
And still they dream that they shall still succeed,
And still are disappointed. Rings the world
With the vain stir. I sum up half mankind,
And add two thirds of the remaining half,
And find the total of their hopes and fears
Dreams, empty dreams. The million flit as gay
As if created only like the fly,
That spreads his motley wings in th' eye of noon,
To sport their season, and be seen no more.
The rest are sober dreamers, grave and wise,
And pregnant with discoveries new and rare.
Some write a narrative of wars, and feats
Of heroes little known; and call the rant
A history: describe the man of whom
His own coevals took but little note,
And paint his person, character, and views,
As they had known him from his mother's womb.
They disentangle from the puzzled skein,
In which obscurity has wrapped them up
The threads of politic and shrewd design,
That ran through all his purposes, and, charge
His mind with meanings that he never had,
Or, having, kept concealed. Some drill and bore
The solid earth, and from the strata there
Extract a register, by which we learn,
That he who made it, and revealed its date
To Moses, was mistaken in its age.
Some, more acute, and more industrious still,
Contrive creation; travel nature up
To the sharp peak of her sublimest height,
And tell us whence the stars; why some are fixed
And planetary some; what gave them first
Rotation, from what fountain flowed their light.
Great contest follows, and much learned dust
Involves the combatants; each claiming truth,
And truth disclaiming both. And thus they spend
The little wick of life's poor shallow lamp
In playing tricks with nature, giving laws
To distant worlds, and trifling in their own.
Is't not a pity now that tickling rheums
Should ever tease the lungs, and blear the sight
Of oracles like these? Great pity too,
That having wielded the elements, and built
A thousand systems, each in his own way,
They should go out in fume, and be forgot?
Ah! what is life thus spent? and what are they
But frantic, who thus spend it? all for smoke—
Eternity for bubbles proves at last
A senseless bargain. When I see such games
Played by the creatures of a Power, who swears

That he will judge the earth and call the fool
To a sharp reckoning, that has lived in vain;
And when I weigh this seeming wisdom well,
And prove it in the infallible result
So hollow and so false—I feel my heart
Dissolve in pity, and account the learned,
If this be learning, most of all deceived.
Great crimes alarm the conscience, but it sleeps,
While thoughtful man is plausibly amused,
Defend me therefore, common sense, say I,
From reveries so airy, from the toil
Of dropping buckets into empty wells,
And growing old in drawing nothing up!
'Twere well, says one sage erudite, profound,
Terribly arched, and aquiline his nose,
And overbuilt with most impending brows,
'Twere well, could you permit the world to live
As the world pleases; what's the world to you?
Much. I was born of woman, and drew milk
As sweet as charity from human breasts.
I think, articulate, I laugh and weep,
And exercise all functions of a man.
How then should I and any man that lives
Be strangers to each other? Pierce my vein,
Take of the crimson stream meandering there,
And catechise it well; apply the glass,
Search it, and prove now if it be not blood
Congenial with thine own, and, if it be,
What edge of subtlety canst thou suppose
Keen enough, wise and skilful as thou art,
To cut the link of brotherhood, by which
One common Maker bound me to the kind?
True; I am no proficient, I confess,
In arts like yours. I can not call the swift
And perilous lightnings from the angry clouds,
And bid them hide themselves in earth beneath,
I can not analyse the air, nor catch
The parallax of yonder luminous point,
That seems half quenched in the immense abyss:
Such powers I boast not—neither can I rest
A silent witness of the headlong rage,
Or heedless folly, by which thousands die,
Bone of my bone, and kindred souls to mine.
God never meant that man should scale the heavens
By stride of human wisdom, in his works,
Though wondrous: he commands us in his word
To seek him rather where his mercy shines.
The mind, indeed, enlightened from above,
Views him in all; ascribes to the grand cause
The grand effect; acknowledges with joy
His manner, and with rapture tastes his style;
But never yet did philosophic tube,
That brings the planets home into the eye
Of observation, and discovers, else
Not visible, his family of worlds,
Discover him that rules them; such a veil
Hangs over mortal eyes, blind from the birth,
And dark in things divine. Full often too
Our wayward intellect, the more we learn
Of nature, overlooks her author more;
From instrumental causes proud to draw
Conclusions retrograde, and mad mistake.
But if his word once teach us, shoot a ray
Through all the heart's dark chambers, and reveal
Truths undiscerned but by that holy light,
Then all is plain. Philosophy, baptized
In the pure fountain of eternal love,
Has eyes indeed; and viewing all she sees
As meant to indicate a God to man,
Gives *him* his praise, and forfeits not her own.
Learning has borne such fruit in other days
On all her branches; piety has found
Friends in the friends of science, and true prayer
Has flowed from lips wet with Castalian dews.
Such was thy wisdom, Newton, child-like sage!
Sagacious reader of the works of God,
And in this word sagacious. Such too thine,
Milton, whose genius had angelic wings,
And fed on manna! And such thine, in whom
Our British Themis gloried with just cause,
Immortal Hale! for deep discernment praised,
And sound integrity, not more than famed
For sanctity of manners undefiled.
All flesh is grass, and all its glory fade
Like the fair flower dishevelled in the wind;
Riches have wings, and grandeur is a dream
The man we celebrate must find a tomb,
And we that worship him ignoble graves.
Nothing is proof against the general curse
Of vanity, that seizes all below.
The only amaranthine flower on earth
Is virtue; th' only lasting treasure, truth.
But what is truth? 'Twas Pilate's question put
To truth itself, that deigned him no reply.
And wherefore? will not God impart his light
To them that ask it?—Freely—'tis his joy,
His glory, and his nature, to impart.
But to the proud, uncandid, insincere,
Or negligent inquirer, not a spark.
What's that, which brings contempt upon a book,
And him who writes it, though the style be neat,
The method clear, and argument exact?
That makes a minister in holy things
The joy of many, and the dread of more,
His name a theme for praise and for reproach?—
That, while it gives us worth in God's account,
Depreciates and undoes us in our own?
What pearl is it that rich men can not buy,
That learning is too proud to gather up;
But which the poor, and the despised of all,
Seek and obtain, and often find unsought?
Tell me—and I will tell thee what is truth.
O friendly to the best pursuits of man,
Friendly to thought, to virtue, and to peace,
Domestic life in rural pleasure passed!
Few know thy value, and few taste thy sweets;
Though many boast thy favours, and affect

To understand and choose thee for their own.
But foolish man foregoes his proper bliss,
E'en as his first progenitor, and quits,
Though placed in Paradise (for earth has still
Some traces of her youthful beauty left,)
Substantial happiness for transient joy.
Scenes formed for contemplation, and to nurse
The growing seeds of wisdom; that suggest,
By every pleasing image they present,
Reflections such as meliorate the heart,
Compose the passions, and exalt the mind;
Scenes such as these 'tis his supreme delight
To fill with riot and defile with blood.
Should some contagion, kind to the poor brutes
We persecute, annihilate the tribes
That draw the sportsman over hill and dale
Fearless, and wrapt away from all his cares;
Should never game-fowl hatch her eggs again,
Nor baited hook deceive the fish's eye;
Could pageantry and dance, and feast and song,
Be quelled in all our summer-months' retreats;
How many self-deluded nymphs and swains,
Who dream they have a taste for fields and groves,
Would find them hideous nurseries of the spleen,
And crowd the roads, impatient for the town!
They love the country, and none else, who seek
For their own sake its silence, and its shade.
Delights which who would leave, that has a heart
Susceptible of pity, or a mind
Cultured and capable of sober thought,
For all the savage din of the swift pack,
And clamours of the field?—detested sport,
That owes its pleasures to another's pain;
That feeds upon the sobs and dying shrieks
Of harmless nature, dumb, but yet endued
With eloquence, that agonies inspire,
Of silent tears and heart-distending sighs?
Vain tears, alas, and sighs that never find
A corresponding tone in jovial souls!
Well—one at least is safe. One sheltered hare
Has never heard the sanguinary yell
Of cruel man, exulting in her woes.
Innocent partner of my peaceful home,
Whom ten long years' experience of my care
Has made at last familiar; she has lost
Much of her vigilant instinctive dread,
Not needful here, beneath a roof like mine.
Yes—thou mayest eat thy bread, and lick the hand
That feeds thee; thou mayest frolic on the floor
At evening, and at night retire secure
To thy straw couch, and slumber unalarmed;
For I have gained thy confidence, have pledged
All that is human in me, to protect
Thine unsuspecting gratitude and love.
If I survive thee, I will dig thy grave;
And, when I place thee in it, sighing say,
I knew at least one hare that had a friend.

How various his employments, whom the world
Calls idle; and who justly in return
Esteems that busy world an idler too!
Friends, books, a garden, and perhaps his pen
Delightful industry enjoyed at home,
And Nature, in her cultivated trim,
Dressed to his taste, inviting him abroad.—
Can he want occupation, who has these?
Will he be idle, who has much t' enjoy?
Me therefore studious of laborious ease,
Not slothful, happy to deceive the time,
Not waste it, and aware that human life
Is but a loan to be repaid with use,
When He shall call his debtors to account,
From whom are all our blessings, business finds
E'en here: while sedulous I seek t' improve,
At least neglect not, or leave unemployed,
The mind he gave me; driving it, though slack
Too oft, and much impeded in its work
By causes not to be divulged in vain,
To its just point—the service of mankind.
He, that attends to his interior self,
That has a heart and keeps it; has a mind
That hungers, and supplies it: and who seeks
A social, not a dissipated life,
Has business; feels himself engaged t' achieve
No unimportant, though a silent, task.
A life all turbulence and noise may seem
To him that leads it wise, and to be praised;
But wisdom is a pearl with most success
Sought in still water, and beneath clear skies.
He that is ever occupied in storms,
Or dives not for it, or brings up instead,
Vainly industrious, a disgraceful prize.

The morning finds the self-sequestered man
Fresh for his task, intend what task he may.
Whether inclement seasons recommend
His warm but simple home, where he enjoys,
With her, who shares his pleasures and his heart,
Sweet converse, sipping calm the fragrant lymph,
Which neatly she prepares; then to his book
Well chosen, and not sullenly perused
In selfish silence, but imparted oft,
As aught occurs, that she may smile to hear,
Or turn to nourishment, digested well,
Or if the garden with its many cares,
All well repaid, demand him, he attends
The welcome call, conscious how much the hand
Of lubbard labour needs his watchful eye,
Oft loitering lazily, if not o'erseen,
Or misapplying his unskilful strength.
Nor does he govern only or direct,
But much performs himself. No works, indeed
That ask robust, tough sinews, bred to toil,
Servile employ: but such as may amuse,
Not tire, demanding rather skill than force.
Proud of his well-spread walls, he views his trees
That meet, no barren interval between,
With pleasure more than e'en their fruits affords;
Which, save himself who trains them, none can
feel.

These therefore are his own peculiar charge;
No meaner hand may discipline the shoots,
None but his steel approach them. What is weak,
Distempered, or has lost prolific powers,
Impaired by age, his unrelenting hand
Dooms to the knife: nor does he spare the soft
And succulent, that feeds its giant growth,
But barren, at th' expense of neighbouring twigs
Less ostentatious, and yet studded thick
With hopeful gems. The rest, no portion left
That may disgrace his art, or disappoint
Large expectation, he disposes neat
At measured distances, that air and sun,
Admitted freely may afford their aid,
And ventilate and warm the swelling buds.
Hence Summer has her riches, Autumn hence,
And hence e'en Winter fills his withered hand
With blushing fruits, and plenty not his own.*
Fair recompense of labour well bestowed,
And wise precaution; which a clime so rude
Makes needful still, whose Spring is but the child
Of churlish Winter, in her froward moods
Discovering much the temper of her sire.
For oft, as if in her the stream of mild
Maternal nature had reversed its course,
She sings her infants forth with many smiles;
But, once delivered, kills them with a frown.
He therefore, timely warned himself, supplies
Her want of care, screening and keeping warm
The plenteous bloom, that no rough blast may sweep
His garlands from the boughs. Again, as oft
As the sun peeps and vernal airs breathe mild,
The fence withdrawn, he gives them every beam,
And spreads his hopes before the blaze of day.

To raise the prickly and green-coated gourd
So grateful to the palate, and when rare
So coveted, else base and discsteemed—
Food for the vulgar merely—is an art
That toiling ages have but just matured,
And at this moment unessayed in song.
Yet gnats have had, and frogs and mice, long since,
Their eulogy; those sang the Mantuan bard,
And these the Grecian, in ennobling strains;
And in thy numbers, Philips, shines for aye
The solitary shilling. Pardon then,
Ye sage dispensers of poetic fame,
Th' ambition of one meaner far, whose powers,
Presuming an attempt not less sublime,
Pant for the praise of dressing to the taste
Of critic appetite, no sordid fare,
A cucumber, while costly yet and scarce.

The stable yields a stercoraceous heap,
Impregnated with quick fermenting salts,
And potent to resist the freezing blast:
For, e'er the beech and elm have cast their leaf
Deciduous, when now November dark
Checks vegetation in the torpid plant
Exposed to his cold breath, the task begins.
Warily, therefore, and with prudent heed,
He seeks a favoured spot; that where he builds
Th' agglomerated pile his frame may front
The sun's meridian disk, and at the back
Enjoy close shelter, wall, or reeds, or hedge
Impervious to the wind. First he bids spread
Dry fern or littered hay, that may imbibe
Th' ascending damps; then leisurely impose,
And lightly, shaking it with agile hand
From the full fork, the saturated straw.
What longest binds the closest forms secure
The shapely side, that as it rises takes,
By just degrees, an overhanging breadth,
Sheltering the base with its projected eaves:
Th' uplifted frame, compact at every joint,
And overlaid with clear translucent glass
He settles next upon the sloping mount,
Whose sharp declivity shoots off secure
From the dashed pane the deluge as it falls.
He shuts it close, and the first labour ends.
Thrice must the voluble and restless earth
Spin round upon her axle, ere the warmth
Slow gathering in the midst, through the square mass
Diffused, attain the surface; when, behold!
A pestilent and most corrosive steam,
Like a gross fog Bœotian, rising fast,
And fast condensed upon the dewy sash,
Asks egress; which obtained, the overcharged
And drenched conservatory breathes abroad,
In volumes wheeling slow, the vapour dank;
And, purified, rejoices to have lost
Its foul inhabitant. But to assuage
Th' impatient fervour, which it first conceives
Within its reeking bosom, threatning death
To his young hopes, requires discreet delay,
Experience, slow preceptress, teaching oft
The way to glory by miscarriage foul,
Must prompt him, and admonish how to catch
Th' auspicious moment, when the tempered heat,
Friendly to vital motion, may afford
Soft fomentation, and invite the seed.
The seed, selected wisely, plump and smooth,
And glossy, he commits to pots of size
Diminutive, well filled with well-prepared
And fruitful soil, that has been treasured long,
And drank no moisture from the dripping clouds.
These on the warm and genial earth, that hides
The smoking manure, and o'erspreads it all,
He places lightly, and, as time subdues
The rage of fermentation, plunges deep
In the soft medium, till they stand immersed.
Then rise the tender germs, upstarting quick,
And spreading wide their spongy lobes; at first
Pale, wan, and livid; but assuming soon,
If fanned by balmy and nutritious air,

* 'Miraturque novos fructus et non sua poma.' *Virg.*

Strained through the friendly mats, a vivid green.
Two leaves produced, two rough indented leaves,
Cautious he pinches from the second stalk
A pimple, that portends a future sprout,
And interdicts its growth. Thence straight succeed
The branches, sturdy to his utmost wish;
Prolific all, and harbingers of more.
The crowded roots demand enlargement now,
And transplantation in an ampler space.
Indulged in what they wish, they soon supply
Large foliage, overshadowing golden flowers,
Blown on the summit of th' apparent fruit.
These have their sexes! and, when summer shines,
The bee transports the fertilizing meal
From flower to flower, and e'en the breathing air
Wafts the rich prize to its appointed use.
Not so when winter scowls. Assistant art
Then acts in Nature's office, brings to pass
The glad espousals, and ensures the crop.
Grudge not, ye rich, (since Luxury must have
His dainties, and the world's more numerous half
Lives by contriving delicates for you,)
Grudge not the cost. Ye little know the cares,
The vigilance, the labour, and the skill,
That day and night are exercised, and hang
Upon the ticklish balance of suspense,
That ye may garnish your profuse regales
With summer fruits brought forth by wintry suns.
Ten thousand dangers lie in wait to thwart
The process. Heat and cold, and wind, and steam,
Moisture and drought, mice, worms, and swarming flies,
Minute as dust, and numberless, oft work
Dire disappointment, that admits no cure,
And which no care can obviate. It were long,
Too long, to tell th' expedients and the shifts,
Which he that fights a season so severe
Devises, while he guards his tender trust;
And oft at last in vain. The learned and wise
Sarcastic would exclaim, and judge the song
Cold as its theme, and like its theme, the fruit
Of too much labour, worthless when produced.
Who loves a garden loves a green-house too.
Unconscious of a less propitious clime,
There blooms exotic beauty, warm and snug,
While the winds whistle, and the snows descend.
The spiry myrtle with unwithering leaf
Shines there and flourishes. The golden boast
Of Portugal and western India there,
The ruddier orange, and the paler lime,
Peep through the polished foliage at the storm,
And seem to smile at what they need not fear.
Th' amomum there, with intermingling flowers
And cherries hangs her twigs. Geranium boasts
Her crimson honours; and the spangled beau,
Ficoides, glitters bright the winter long.
All plants, of every leaf, that can endure
The winter's frown, if screened from his shrewd bite,

Live there, and prosper. Those Ausonia claims,
Levantine regions these; the Azores send
Their jessamine, her jessamine remote
Caffraria; foreigners from many lands,
They form one social shade, as if convened
By magic summons of th' Orphean lyre.
Yet just arrangement, rarely brought to pass
But by a master's hand, disposing well
The gay diversities of leaf and flower,
Must lend its aid t' illustrate all their charms,
And dress the regular yet various scene.
Plant behind plant aspiring, in the van
The dwarfish, in the rear retired, but still,
Sublime above the rest, the statelier stand.
So once were ranged the sons of ancient Rome
A noble show! while Roscius trod the stage,
And so, while Garrick, as renowned as he,
The sons of Albion; fearing each to lose
Some note of Nature's music from his lips,
And covetous of Shakspeare's beauty, seen
In every flash of his far-beaming eye.
Nor taste alone and well contrived display
Suffice to give the marshalled ranks the grace
Of their complete effect. Much yet remains
Unsung, and many cares are yet behind,
And more laborious; cares on which depends
Their vigour, injured soon, not soon restored.
The soil must be renewed, which, often washed,
Loses its treasure of salubrious salts,
And disappoints the roots; the slender roots
Close interwoven, and where they meet the vase
Must smooth be shorn away; the sapless branch
Must fly before the knife; the withered leaf
Must be detached, where it strews the floor
Swept with a woman's neatness, breeding else
Contagion, and disseminating death.
Discharge but these kind offices, (and who
Would spare, that loves them, offices like these?)
Well they reward the toil. The sight is pleased,
The scent regaled, each odoriferous leaf,
Each opening blossom freely breathes abroad
Its gratitude, and thanks him with its sweets.
So manifold, all pleasing in their kind,
All healthful, are th' employs of rural life,
Reiterated as the wheel of time
Runs round; still ending, and beginning still.
Nor are these all. To deck the shapely knoll,
That softly swelled and gayly dressed appears
A flowery island, from the dark green lawn
Emerging, must be deemed a labour due
To no mean hand, and asks the touch of taste.
Here also grateful mixture of well-matched
And sorted hues (each giving each relief,
And by contrasted beauty shining more)
Is needful. Strength may wield the ponderous spade,
May turn the clod, and wheel the compost home;
But elegance, chief grace the garden shows,
And most attractive, is the fair result

Of thought, the creature of a polished mind.
Without it all is gothic as the scene,
To which the insipid citizen resorts
Near yonder heath; where Industry mispent,
But proud of his uncouth ill-chosen task,
Has made a heaven on earth; with suns and moons
Of close rammed stones has charged th' encumbered soil,
And fairly laid the zodiac in the dust.
He, therefore, who would see his flowers disposed
Sightly and in just order, ere he gives
The beds the trusted treasure of their seeds,
Forecasts the future whole; that when the scene
Shall break into its preconceived display,
Each for itself, and all as with one voice
Conspiring, may attest his bright design.
Nor even then, dismissing as performed
His pleasant work may he suppose it done.
Few self-supported flowers endure the wind
Uninjured, but expect th' upholding aid
Of the smooth-shaven prop, and, neatly tied,
Are wedded thus, like beauty to old age,
For interest sake, the living to the dead.
Some clothe the soil that feeds them, far diffused
And lowly creeping, modest and yet fair,
Like virtue, thriving most where little seen.
Some more aspiring catch the neighbour shrub
With clasping tendrils, and invest his branch,
Else unadorned, with many a gay festoon
And fragrant chaplet, recompensing well
The strength they borrow with the grace they lend.
All hate the rank society of weeds,
Noisome, and ever greedy to exhaust
Th' impoverished earth; an overbearing race.
That, like the multitude made faction-mad,
Disturb good order, and degrade true worth.
O blest seclusion from a jarring world,
Which he, thus occupied, enjoys! Retreat
Can not indeed to guilty man restore
Lost innocence, or cancel follies past;
But it has peace, and much secures the mind
From all assaults of evil; proving still
A faithful barrier, not o'erleaped with ease
By vicious Custom, raging uncontrolled
Abroad, and desolating public life.
When fierce Temptation, seconded within
By traitor Appetite, and armed with darts
Tempered in hell, invades the throbbing breast,
To combat may be glorious, and success
Perhaps may crown us; but to fly is safe.
Had I the choice of sublunary good,
What could I wish, that I possess not here?
Health, leisure, means t' improve it, friendship, peace,
No loose or wanton, though a wandering muse,
And constant occupation without care.
Thus blest I draw a picture of that bliss;
Hopeless, indeed, that dissipated minds,
And profligate abusers of a world
Created fair so much in vain for them,
Should seek the guiltless joys, that I describe,
Allured by my report: but sure no less,
That self-condemned they must neglect the prize,
And what they will not taste must yet approve.
What we admire we praise; and, when we praise
Advance it into notice, that, is worth
Acknowledged, others may admire it too.
I therefore recommend, though at the risk
Of popular disgust, yet boldly still,
The cause of piety, and sacred truth,
And virtue, and those scenes, which God ordained
Should best secure them, and promote them most,
Scenes that I love, and with regret perceive
Forsaken, or through folly not enjoyed.
Pure is the nymph, though liberal of her smiles,
And chaste, though unconfined, whom I extol,
Not as the prince in Shushan, when he called,
Vainglorious of her charms, his Vashti forth,
To grace the full pavilion. His design
Was but to boast his own peculiar good,
Which all might view with envy, none partake.
My charmer is not mine alone; my sweets,
And she that sweetens all my bitters too,
Nature, enchanting Nature, in whose form
And lineaments divine I trace a hand
That errs not, and find raptures still renewed,
Is free to all men—universal prize.
Strange that so fair a creature should yet want
Admirers and be destined to divide
With meaner objects e'en the few she finds;
Stripped of her ornaments, her leaves and flowers,
She loses all her influence. Cities then
Attract us, and neglected Nature pines
Abandoned, as unworthy of our love.
But are not wholesome airs, though unperfumed
By roses; and clear suns, though scarcely felt;
And groves, if unharmonious, yet secure
From clamour, and whose very silence charms;
To be preferred to smoke, to the eclipse
That metropolitan volcanoes make,
Whose Stygian throats breathe darkness all day long?
And to the stir of Commerce, driving slow,
And thundering loud, with his ten thousand wheels;
They would be, were not madness in the head,
And folly in the heart; were England now
What England was,—plain, hospitable, kind,
And undebauched. But we have bid farewell
To all the virtues of those better days,
And all their honest pleasures. Mansions once
Knew their own masters; and laborious hinds,
Who had survived the father, served the son.
Now the legitimate and rightful lord
Is but a transient guest, newly arrived,
As soon to be supplanted. He, that saw

His patrimonial timber cast its leaf,
Sells the last scantling, and transfers the price
To some shrewd sharper, ere it buds again.
Estates are landscapes, gazed upon awhile
Then advertised, and auctioneered away.
The country starves, and they, that feed th' o'er-
charged
And surfeited lewd town with her fair dues,
By a just judgment strip and starve themselves.
The wings, that waft our riches out of sight,
Grow on the gamester's elbows; and th' alert
And nimble motion of those restless joints,
That never tire, soon fans them all away.
Improvement too, the idol of the age,
Is fed with many a victim. Lo, he comes!
The omnipotent magician, Brown, appears!
Down falls the venerable pile, th' abode
Of our forefathers—a grave whiskered race,
But tasteless. Springs a palace in its stead,
But in a distant spot; where more exposed
It may enjoy th' advantage of the north,
And aguish east, till time shall have transformed
Those naked acres to a sheltering grove.
He speaks. The lake in front becomes a lawn;
Woods vanish, hills subside, and valleys rise;
And streams, as if created for his use,
Pursue the tract of his directing wand,
Sinuous or straight, now rapid and now slow,
Now murmuring soft, now roaring in cascades—
E'en as he bids! Th' enraptured owner smiles.
'Tis finished, and yet, finished as it seems,
Still wants a grace, the loveliest it could show,
A mine to satisfy th' enormous cost.
Drained to the last poor item of its wealth,
He sighs, departs, and leaves th' accomplished
plan
That he has touched, retouched, many a long day
Laboured, and many a night pursued in dreams,
Just when it meets his hopes, and proves the
heaven
He wanted, for a wealthier to enjoy!
And now perhaps the glorious hour is come,
When, having no stake left, no pledge t' endear
Her interests, or that gives her sacred cause
A moment's operation on his love,
He burns with most intense and flagrant zeal
To serve his country. Ministerial grace
Deals him out money from the public chest;
Or, if that mine be shut, some private purse
Supplies his need with a usurious loan,
To be refunded duly, when his vote,
Well-managed, shall have earned its worthy price.
O innocent, compared with arts like these,
Crape, and cocked pistol, and the whistling ball
Sent through the traveller's temples! He that finds
One drop of heaven's sweet mercy in his cup,
Can dig, beg, rot, and perish, well content,
So he may wrap himself in honest rags
At his last gasp; but could not for a world
Fish up his dirty and dependent bread
From pools and ditches of the commonwealth,
Sordid and sickening at his own success.
Ambition, avarice, penury incurred
By endless riot, vanity, the lust
Of pleasure and variety, despatch,
As duly as the swallows disappear,
The world of wandering knights and squires to
town.
London ingulfs them all! The shark is there,
And the shark's prey; the spendthrift, and the
leech
That sucks him; there the sycophant, and he
Who with bareheaded and obsequious bows
Begs a warm office, doomed to a cold jail
And groat per diem, if his patron frown.
The levee swarms, as if in golden pomp
Were charactered on every statesman's door,
'*Battered and bankrupt fortunes mended here.*'
These are the charms, that sully and eclipse
The charms of nature. 'Tis the cruel gripe,
That lean, hard-handed Poverty inflicts,
The hope of better things, the chance to win,
The wish to shine, the thirst to be amused,
That at the sound of Winter's hoary wing
Unpeople all our counties of such herds
Of fluttering, loitering, cringing, begging, loose,
And wanton vagrants, as make London, vast
And boundless as it is, a crowded coop.
O thou, resort and mart of all the earth,
Checkered with all complexions of mankind,
And spotted with all crimes; in whom I see
Much that I love, and more that I admire,
And all that I abhor; thou freckled fair,
That pleasest and yet shock'st me, I can laugh,
And I can weep, can hope, and can despond,
Feel wrath and pity, when I think on thee!
Ten righteous would have saved a city once,
And thou hast many righteous.—Well for thee-
That salt preserves thee; more corrupted else,
And therefore more obnoxious, at this hour,
Than Sodom in her day had power to be,
For whom God heard his Abraham plead in vain

The Task.

BOOK IV.

THE WINTER EVENING.

ARGUMENT.

The post comes in.—The newspaper is read.—The world contemplated at a distance.—Address to Winter.—The rural amusements of a winter evening compared with the fashionable ones.—Address to Evening.—A brown study.—Fall of snow in the evening.—The wagoner.—A poor family-piece.—The rural thief.—Public houses.—The multitude of them censured.—The farmer's daughter; what she was—what she is.—The simplicity of country manners almost lost.—Causes of the change.—Desertion of the country by the rich.—Neglect of magistrates.—The militia principally in fault.—The new recruit and his transformation.—Reflection on bodies corporate.—The love of rural objects natural to all, and never to be totally extinguished.

Hark! 'tis the twanging horn o'er yonder bridge,
That with its wearisome but needful length
Bestrides the wintry flood, in which the moon
Sees her unwrinkled face reflected bright;—
He comes, the herald of a noisy world,
With spattered boots, strapped waist, and frozen locks;
News from all nations lumbering at his back.
True to his charge, the close packed load behind,
Yet careless what he brings, his one concern
Is to conduct it to the destined inn;
And, having dropped th' expected bag, pass on.
He whistles as he goes, light-hearted wretch,
Cold and yet cheerful: messenger of grief
Perhaps to thousands, and of joy to some;
To him indifferent whether grief or joy.
Houses in ashes, and the fall of stocks,
Births, deaths, and marriages, epistles wet
With tears, that trickled down the writer's cheeks,
Fast as the periods from his fluent quill,
Or charged with amorous sighs of absent swains,
Or nymphs responsive, equally affect
His horse and him, unconscious of them all.
But O, th' important budget! ushered in
With such heart-shaking music, who can say,
What are its tidings? have our troops awaked?
Or do they still, as if with opium drugged,
Snore to the murmurs of the Atlantic wave?
Is India free? and does she wear her plumed
And jewelled turban with a smile of peace,
Or do we grind her still? The grand debate,
The popular harangue, the tart reply,
The logic, and the wisdom, and the wit,
And the loud laugh—I long to know them all;
I burn to set th' imprisoned wranglers free,
And give them voice and utterance once again.
Now stir the fire, and close the shutters fast,
Let fall the curtains, wheel the sofa round,
And, while the bubbling and loud hissing urn
Throws up a steamy column, and the cups,
That cheer but not inebriate, wait on each,
So let us welcome peaceful evening in;
Not such his evening, who with shining face
Sweats in the crowded theatre, and, squeezed
And bored with elbow-points through both his sides,
Outscolds the ranting actor on the stage:
Nor his, who patient stands till his feet throb,
And his head thumps, to feed upon the breath
Of patriots, bursting with heroic rage,
Or placemen, all tranquillity and smiles.
This folio of four pages, happy work,
Which not e'en critics criticise; that holds
Inquisitive attention, while I read,
Fast bound in chains of silence, which the fair,
Though eloquent themselves, yet fear to break;
What is it, but a map of busy life,
Its fluctuations, and its vast concerns?
Here runs the mountainous and craggy ridge,
That tempts ambition. On the summit see
The seals of office glitter in his eyes:
He climbs, he pants, he grasps them! At his heels,
Close at his heels, a demagogue ascends,
And with a dexterous jerk soon twists him down,
And wins them, but to lose them in his turn.
Here rills of oily eloquence in soft
Meanders lubricate the course they take;
The modest speaker is ashamed and grieved,
T' engross a moment's notice; and yet begs,
Begs a propitious ear for his poor thoughts,
However trivial all that he conceives.
Sweet bashfulness! it claims at least this praise;
The dearth of information and good sense,
That it foretells us, always comes to pass.
Cataracts of declamation thunder here;
There forests of no meaning spread the page,
In which all comprehension wanders lost;
While fields of pleasantry amuse us there
With merry descants on a nation's woes.
The rest appears a wilderness of strange
But gay confusion; roses for the cheeks,
And lilies for the brows of faded age,
Teeth for the toothless, ringlets for the bald,
Heaven, earth, and ocean, plundered of their sweets
Nectareous essences, Olympian dews,
Sermons, and city feasts, and favourite airs,
Æthereal journeys, submarine exploits,

And Katterfelto, with his hair on end
At his own wonders, wondering for his bread.
'Tis pleasant, through the loopholes of retreat,
To peep at such a world; to see the stir
Of the great Babel, and not feel the crowd;
To hear the roar she sends through all her gates
At a safe distance, where the dying sound
Falls a soft murmur on th' uninjured ear.
Thus sitting, and surveying thus at ease
The globe and its concerns, I seem advanced
To some secure and more than mortal height,
That liberates and exempts me from them all.
It turns submitted to my view, turns round
With all its generations; I behold
The tumult, and am still. The sound of war
Has lost its terrors ere it reaches me;
Grieves, but alarms me not. I mourn the pride
And avarice that makes man a wolf to man;
Hear the faint echo of those brazen throats,
By which he speaks the language of his heart,
And sigh, but never tremble at the sound.
He travels and expatiates, as the bee
From flower to flower, so he from land to land:
The manners, customs, policy of all
Pay contribution to the store he gleans;
He sucks intelligence in every clime,
And spreads the honey of his deep research
At his return—a rich repast for me.
He travels, and I too. I tread his deck,
Ascend his topmast, through his peering eyes
Discover countries, with a kindred heart
Suffers his woes, and share in his escapes;
While fancy, like the finger of a clock,
Runs the great circuit, and is still at home.
O Winter, ruler of th' inverted year,
Thy scattered hair with sleet like ashes filled,
Thy breath congealed upon thy lips, thy cheeks
Fringed with a beard made white with other snows
Than those of age, thy forehead wrapped in clouds,
A leafless branch thy sceptre, and thy throne
A sliding car, indebted to no wheels,
But urged by storms along its slippery way,
I love thee, all unlovely as thou seem'st,
And dreaded as thou art! Thou hold'st the sun
A prisoner in the yet undawning east,
Shortening his journey between morn and noon,
And hurrying him, impatient of his stay,
Down to the rosy west; but kindly still
Compensating his loss with added hours
Of social converse and instructive ease,
And gathering, at short notice, in one group
The family dispersed, and fixing thought,
Not less dispersed by daylight and its cares.
I crown thee king of intimate delights,
Fireside enjoyments, homeborn happiness,
And all the comforts, that the lowly roof
Of undisturbed Retirement, and the hours
Of long uninterrupted evening, know.
No rattling wheels stop short before these gates;
No powdered pert proficient in the art
Of sounding an alarm assaults these doors
Till the street rings; no stationary steeds
Cough their own knell, while heedless of the sound,
The silent circle fan themselves, and quake:
But here the needle plies its busy task,
The pattern grows, the well depicted flower,
Wrought patiently into the snowy lawn,
Unfolds its bosom; buds, and leaves, and sprigs,
And curling tendrils, gracefully disposed,
Follow the nimble finger of the fair;
A wreath that can not fade, of flowers, that blow
With most success when all besides decay.
The poet's or historian's page by one
Made vocal for th' amusement of the rest;
The sprightly lyre, whose treasure of sweet sounds
The touch from many a trembling chord shakes out;
And the clear voice symphonious, yet distinct,
And in the charming strife triumphant still,
Beguile the night, and set a keener edge
On female industry: the threaded steel
Flies swiftly, and unfelt the task proceeds.
The volume closed, the customary rites
Of the last meal commence. A Roman meal;
Such as the mistress of the world once found
Delicious, when her patriots of high note,
Perhaps by moonlight, at their humble doors,
And under an old oak's domestic shade,
Enjoyed, spare feast! a radish and an egg.
Discourse ensues, not trivial, yet not dull,
Nor such as with a frown forbids the play
Of fancy, or prescribes the sound of mirth.
Nor do we madly, like an impious world,
Who deem religion frenzy, and the God
That made them, an intruder on their joys,
Start at his awful name, or deem his praise
A jarring note. Themes of a graver tone,
Exciting oft our gratitude and love,
While we retrace with Memory's pointing wand,
That calls the past to our exact review,
The dangers we have 'scaped, the broken snare,
The disappointed foe, deliverance found
Unlooked for, life preserved, and peace restored,
Fruits of omnipotent eternal love.
O evenings worthy of the gods! exclaimed
The Sabine bard. O evenings, I reply,
More to be prized and coveted than yours,
As more illumined, and with nobler truths,
That I, and mine, and those we love, enjoy.
Is Winter hideous in a garb like this?
Needs he the tragic fur, the smoke of lamps,
The pent-up breath of an unsavoury throng,
To thaw him into feeling; or the smart
And snappish dialogue, that flippant wits
Call comedy, to prompt him with a smile?
The self-complacent actor, when he views

(Stealing a sidelong glance at a full house)
The slope of faces from the floor to th' roof
(As if one master-spring controlled them all)
Relaxed into a universal grin,
Sees not a countenance there that speaks of joy
Half so refined or so sincere as ours.
Cards were superfluous here, with all the tricks,
That idleness has ever yet contrived
To fill the void of an unfurnished brain,
To palliate dullness, and give time a shove.
Time, as he passes us, has a dove's wing,
Unsoiled and swift, and of a silken sound;
But the world's Time is Time in masquerade!
Theirs, should I paint him, has his pinions fledged
With motley plumes; and, where the peacock shows
His azure eyes, is tinctured black and red
With spots quadrangular of diamond form,
Ensanguined hearts, clubs typical of strife,
And spades, the emblem of untimely graves.
What should be, and what was an hour-glass once,
Becomes a dice-box, and a billiard mace
Well does the work of his destructive scythe.
Thus decked, he charms a world whom fashion blinds
To his true worth, most pleased when idle most;
Whose only happy are their wasted hours.
E'en misses, at whose age their mothers wore
The backstring and the bib, assume the dress
Of womanhood, fit pupils in the school
Of card-devoted Time, and night by night
Placed at some vacant corner of the board,
Learn every trick, and soon play all the game.
But truce with censure. Roving as I rove,
Where shall I find an end, or how proceed?
As he who travels far oft turns aside,
To view some rugged rock or mouldering tower,
Which seen delights him not; then coming home,
Describes and prints it, that the world may know
How far he went for what was nothing worth;
So I, with brush in hand, and palette spread,
With colours mixed for a far different use,
Paint cards, and dolls, and every idle thing,
That Fancy finds in her excursive flights.
Come, Evening, once again, season of peace;
Return, sweet Evening, and continue long!
Methinks I see thee in the streaky west,
With matron step slow moving, while the Night
Treads on thy sweeping train! one hand employed
In letting fall the curtain of repose
On bird and beast, the other charged for man
With sweet oblivion of the cares of day:
Not sumptuously adorned, not needing aid,
Like homely-featured Night, of clustering gems;
A star or two just twinkling on thy brow,
Suffices thee; save that the moon is thine
No less than hers, not worn indeed on high
With ostentatious pageantry, but set
With modest grandeur in thy purple zone,
Resplendent less, but of an ampler round.
Come then, and thou shalt find thy votary calm,
Or make me so. Composure is thy gift:
And, whether I devote thy gentle hours
To books, to music, or the poet's toil;
To weaving nets for bird-alluring fruit;
Or twining silken threads round ivory reels.
When they command whom man was born to please
I slight thee not, but make thee welcome still.
Just when our drawing-rooms begin to blaze
With lights, by clear reflection multiplied
From many a mirror, in which he of Gath,
Goliah, might have seen his giant bulk
Whole without stooping, towering crest and all,
My pleasures too begin. But me perhaps
The glowing hearth may satisfy awhile
With faint illumination, that uplifts
The shadows to the ceiling, there by fits
Dancing uncouthly to the quivering flame.
Not undelighted is an hour to me
So spent in parlour twilight: such a gloom
Suits well the thoughtful or unthinking mind,
The mind contemplative, with some new theme
Pregnant, or indisposed alike to all.
Laugh ye, who boast your more mercurial powers,
That never felt a stupor, know no pause,
Nor need one; I am conscious, and confess
Fearless, a soul that does not always think.
Me oft has Fancy ludicrous and wild
Soothed me with a waking dream of houses, towers,
Trees, churches, and strange visages, expressed
In the red cinders, while with poring eye
I gazed, myself creating what I saw.
Nor less amused have I quiescent watched
The sooty films, that play upon the bars
Pendulous, and foreboding in the view
Of superstition, prophesying still,
Though still deceived, some stranger's near approach,
'Tis thus the understanding takes repose
In indolent vacuity of thought,
And sleeps, and is refreshed. Meanwhile the face
Conceals the mood lethargic with a mask
Of deep deliberation, as the man
Were tasked to his full strength, absorbed and lost.
Thus oft, reclined at ease, I lose an hour
At evening, till at length the freezing blast,
That sweeps the bolted shutter, summons home
The recollected powers; and snapping short
The glassy threads, with which the fancy weaves
Her brittle toils, restores me to myself.
How calm is my recess; and how the frost,
Raging abroad, and the rough wind endear
The silence and the warmth enjoyed within?
I saw the woods and fields at close of day
A variegated show; the meadows green,
Though faded; and the lands, where lately waved

The golden harvest, of a mellow brown,
Upturned so lately by the forceful share.
I saw far off the weedy fallows smile
With verdure not unprofitable, grazed
By flocks, fast feeding; and selecting each
His favourite herb; while all the leafless groves
That skirt the horizon, wore a sable hue,
Scarce noticed in the kindred dusk of eve.
To-morrow brings a change, a total change!
Which even now, though silently performed,
And slowly, and by most unfelt, the face
Of universal nature undergoes.
Fast falls a fleecy shower: the downy flakes
Descending, and, with never-ceasing lapse,
Softly alighting upon all below,
Assimilate all objects. Earth receives
Gladly the thickening mantle; and the green
And tender blade, that feared the chilling blast,
Escapes unhurt beneath so warm a veil.
In such a world, so thorny, and where none
Finds happiness unblighted, or, if found,
Without some thistly sorrow at its side,
It seems the part of wisdom, and no sin
Against the law of love, to measure lots
With less distinguished than ourselves; that thus
We may with patience bear our moderate ills,
And sympathize with others suffering more.
Ill fares the traveller now, and he that stalks
In ponderous boots beside his reeking team.
The wain goes heavily, impeded sore
By congregated loads adhering close
To the clogged wheels; and in its sluggish pace
Noiseless appears a moving hill of snow.
The toiling steeds expand the nostril wide,
While every breath, by respiration strong
Forced downward, is consolidated soon
Upon their jutting chests. He, formed to bear
The pelting brunt of the tempestuous night,
With half-shut eyes, and puckered cheeks and teeth
Presented bare against the storm, plods on.
One hand secures his hat, save when with both
He brandishes his pliant length of whip,
Resounding oft, and never heard in vain.
O happy; and in my account denied
That sensibility of pain, with which
Refinement is endued, thrice happy thou!
Thy frame, robust and hardy, feels indeed
The piercing cold, but feels it unimpaired.
The learned finger never need explore
The vigorous pulse; and the unhealthful east,
That breathes the spleen, and searches every bone
Of the infirm, is wholesome air to thee.
Thy days roll on exempt from household care;
Thy wagon is thy wife; and the poor beasts;
That drag the dull companion to and fro,
Thine helpless charge, dependent on thy care.
Ah treat them kindly! rude as thou appear'st,
Yet show that thou hast mercy! which the great,
With needless hurry whirled from place to place,
Humane as they would seem, not always show
Poor, yet industrious, modest, quiet, neat,
Such claim compassion in a night like this,
And have a friend in every feeling heart.
Warmed, while it lasts, by labour, all day long
They brave the season, and yet find at eve,
Ill clad and fed but sparely, time too cool.
The frugal housewife trembles when she lights
Her scanty stock of brushwood, blazing clear,
But dying soon, like all terrestrial joys.
The few small embers left she nurses well;
And, while her infant race, with outspread hands,
And crowded knees sit cowering o'er the sparks,
Retires, content to quake, so they be warmed.
The man feels least, as more inured than she
To winter and the current in his veins
More briskly moved by his severer toil;
Yet he too finds his own distress in theirs.
The taper soon extinguished, which I saw
Dangled along at the cold finger's end
Just when the day declined; and the brown loaf
Lodged on the shelf, half eaten without sauce
Of savoury cheese, or butter, costlier still;
Sleep seems their only refuge; for alas!
Where penury is felt the thought is chained,
And sweet colloquial pleasures are but few.
With all this thrift they thrive not. All the care
Ingenious parsimony takes, but just
Saves the small inventory, bed, and stool,
Skillet, and old carved chest, from public sale.
They live, and live without extorted alms
From grudging hands; but other boast have none
To soothe their honest pride, that scorns to beg,
Nor comfort else, but in their mutual love.
I praise you much, ye weak and patient pair,
For ye are worthy; choosing rather far
A dry but independent crust, hard earned,
And eaten with a sigh, than to endure
The rugged frowns and insolent rebuffs
Of knaves in office, partial in the work
Of distribution; liberal of their aid
To clamorous Importunity in rags,
But oftimes deaf to suppliants, who would blush
To wear a tattered garb, however coarse,
Whom famine can not reconcile to filth:
These ask with painful shyness, and, refused
Because deserving, silently retire!
But be ye of good courage! Time itself
Shall much befriend you. Time shall give increase,
And all your numerous progeny, well trained
But helpless, in few years shall find their hands,
And labour too. Mean-while ye shall not want
What, conscious of your virtues, we can spare,
Nor what a wealthier than ourselves may send.
I mean the man, who, when the distant poor
Need help, denies them nothing but his name.
But poverty with most, who whimper forth

Their long complaints, is self-inflicted wo;
The effect of laziness or sottish waste.
Now goes the nightly thief prowling abroad
For plunder: much solicitous how best
He may compensate for a day of sloth
By works of darkness and nocturnal wrong.
Wo to the gardener's pale, the farmer's hedge,
Plashed neatly, and secured with driven stakes
Deep in the loamy bank. Uptorn by strength,
Resistless in so bad a cause, but lame
To better deeds, he bundles up the spoil,
An ass's burthen, and, when laden most
And heaviest, light of foot steals fast away.
Nor does the boarded hovel better guard
The well-stacked pile of riven logs and roots,
From his pernicious force. Nor will he leave
Unwrenched the door, however well secured,
Where chanticleer amidst his haram sleeps
In unsuspecting pomp. Twitched from the perch,
He gives the princely bird, with all his wives,
To his voracious bag, struggling in vain,
And loudly wondering at the sudden change.
Nor this to feed his own. 'Twere some excuse,
Did pity of their sufferings warp aside
His principle, and tempt him into sin
For their support, so destitute. But they
Neglected pine at home; themselves, as more
Exposed than others, with less scruple made
His victims, robbed of their defenceless all.
Cruel is all he does. 'Tis quenchless thirst
Of ruinous ebriety, that prompts
His every action, and imbrutes the man.
O for a law to noose the villain's neck,
Who starves his own; who persecutes the blood
He gave them in his children's veins, and hates
And wrongs the woman he has sworn to love!
Pass where we may, through city or through town,
Village, or hamlet, of this merry land,
Though lean and beggared, every twentieth pace
Conducts the unguarded nose to such a whiff
Of stale debauch, forth issuing from the styes
That law has licensed, as makes temperance reel.
There sit, involved and lost in curling clouds
Of Indian fume, and guzzling deep, the boor,
The lackey, and the groom: The craftsman there
Takes Lethean leave of all his toil;
Smith, cobler, joiner, he that plies the shears,
And he that kneads the dough; all loud alike,
All learned, and all drunk! the fiddle screams
Plaintive and piteous, as it wept and wailed
Its wasted tones and harmony unheard:
Fierce the dispute whate'er the theme; while she,
Fell Discord, arbitress of such debate,
Perched on the signpost, holds with even hand
Her undecisive scales. In this she lays
A weight of ignorance; in that, of pride:
And smiles delighted with th' eternal poise
Dire is the frequent curse, and its twin sound,
The cheek distending oath, not to be praised
As ornamental, musical, polite,
Like those, which modern senators employ,
Whose oath is rhetoric, and who swear for fame!
Behold the schools in which plebeian minds,
Once simple, are initiated in arts
Which some may practise with politer grace,
But none with readier skill!—'tis here they learn
The road, that leads from competence and peace
To indigence and rapine; till at last
Society, grown weary of the load,
Shakes her encumbered lap, and casts them out.
But censure profits little: vain th' attempt,
To advertise in verse a public pest,
That, like the filth with which the peasant feeds
His hungry acres, stinks, and is of use.
Th' excise is fattened with the rich result
Of all this riot; and ten thousand casks,
For ever dribbling out their base contents,
Touched by the Midas finger of the state,
Bleed gold for ministers to sport away.
Drink, and be mad then; 'tis your country bids!
Gloriously drunk obey th' important call!
Her cause demands th' assistance of your throats
Ye all can swallow, and she asks no more.

Would I had fallen upon those happier days,
That poets celebrate; those golden times,
And those Arcadian scenes that Maro sings,
And Sidney, warbler of poetic prose.
Nymphs were Dianas then, and swains had hearts
That felt their virtues: Innocence, it seems,
From courts dismissed, found shelter in the groves,
The footsteps of Simplicity, impressed
Upon the yielding herbage, (so they sing)
Then were not all effaced: then speech profane,
And manners profligate, were rarely found,
Observed as prodigies, and soon reclaimed.
Vain wish! those days were never: airy dreams
Sat for the picture: and the poet's hand,
Imparting substance to an empty shade,
Imposed a gay delirium for a truth.
Grant it: I still must envy them an age,
That favoured such a dream; in days like these
Impossible, when virtue is so scarce,
That to suppose a scene where she presides,
Is tramontane, and stumbles all belief.
No: we are polished now. The rural lass
Whom once her virgin modesty and grace,
Her artless manners, and her neat attire,
So dignified, that she was hardly less
Than the fair shepherdess of old romance,
Is seen no more. The character is lost!
Her head, adorned with lappets pinned aloft,
And ribands streaming gay, superbly raised,
And magnified beyond all human size,
Indebted to some smart wig-weaver's hand
For more than half the tresses it sustains;
Her elbows ruffled and her tottering frame

Ill-propped upon French heels; she might be deemed
(But that the basket dangling on her arm
Interprets her more truly) of a rank
Too proud for dairy-work, or sale of eggs.
Expect her soon with footboy at her heels,
No longer blushing for her awkward load,
Her train and her umbrella all her care!
The town has tinged the country; and the state
Appears a spot upon a vestal's robe,
The worse for what it soils. The fashion runs
Down into scenes still rural; but, alas,
Scenes rarely graced with rural manners now!
Time was when in the pastoral retreat
Th' unguarded door was safe; men did not watch
T' invade another's right, or guard their own.
Then sleep was undisturbed by fear, unscared
By drunken howlings; and the chilling tale
Of midnight murder was a wonder heard
With doubtful credit, told to frighten babes.
But farewell now to unsuspicious nights,
And slumbers unalarmed! Now, ere you sleep,
See that your polished arms be primed with care,
And drop the nightbolt; ruffians are abroad,
And the first larum of the cock's shrill throat
May prove a trumpet, summoning your ear
To horrid sounds of hostile feet within.
E'en daylight has its dangers; and the walk
Through pathless wastes and woods, unconscious once
Of other tenants than melodious birds,
Or harmless flocks, is hazardous and bold.
Lamented change! to which full many a cause
Inveterate, hopeless of a cure, conspires.
The course of human things from good to ill
From ill to worse, is fatal, never fails.
Increase of power begets increase of wealth,
Wealth luxury, and luxury excess;
Excess the scrofulous and itchy plague,
That seizes first the opulent, descends
To the next rank contagious, and in time
Taints downward all the graduated scale
Of order, from the chariot to the plough.
The rich, and they that have an arm to check
The license of the lowest in degree,
Desert their office; and themselves, intent
On pleasure, haunt the capital, and thus
To all the violence of lawless hands
Resign the scenes their presence might protect.
Authority herself not seldom sleeps,
Though resident, and witness of the wrong.
The plump convivial parson often bears
The magisterial sword in vain, and lays
His reverence and his worship both to rest
On the same cushion of habitual sloth.
Perhaps timidity restrains his arm;
When he should strike he trembles, and sets free,
Himself enslaved by terror of the band,
Th' audacious convict whom he dares not bind.
Perhaps, though by profession ghostly pure,
He too may have his vice, and sometimes prove
Less dainty than becomes his grave outside
In lucrative concerns. Examine well
His milkwhite hand; the palm is hardly clean—
But here and there an ugly smutch appears.
Foh! 'twas a bribe that left it: he has touched
Corruption. Whoso seeks an audit here
Propitious, pays his tribute, game or fish,
Wild fowl or venison; and his errand speeds.
But faster far, and more than all the rest,
A noble cause, which none, who bears a spark
Of public virtue, ever wished removed,
Works the deplored and mischievous effect
'Tis universal soldiership has stabbed
The heart of merit in the meaner class.
Arms, through the vanity and brainless rage
Of those that bear them, in whatever cause,
Seem most at variance with all moral good,
And incompatible with serious thought.
The clown, the child of nature, without guile,
Blest with an infant's ignorance, of all
But his own simple pleasures; now and then
A wrestling match, a foot-race, or a fair;
Is balloted, and trembles at the news:
Sheepish he doffs his hat, and mumbling swears
A Bible oath to be whate'er they please,
To do he knows not what. The task performed,
That instant he becomes the sergeant's care,
His pupil, and his torment, and his jest.
His awkward gait, his introverted toes,
Bent knees, round shoulders, and dejected looks,
Procure him many a curse. By slow degrees,
Unapt to learn, and formed of stubborn stuff,
He yet by slow degrees puts off himself,
Grows conscious of a change, and likes it well;
He stands erect; his slouch becomes a walk;
He steps right onward, martial in his air,
His form, and movement; is as smart above
As meal and larded locks can make him; wears
His hat, or his plumed helmet, with a grace;
And, his three years of heroship expired,
Returns indignant to the slighted plough.
He hates the field, in which no fife or drum
Attends him; drives his cattle to a march;
And sighs for the smart comrades he has left.
'Twere well if his exterior change were all—
But with his clumsy port the wretch has lost
His ignorance and harmless manners too.
To swear, to game, to drink; to show at home
By lewdness, idleness, and sabbath-breach,
The great proficiency he made abroad;
T' astonish and to grieve his gazing friends,
To break some maiden's and his mother's heart;
To be a pest where he was useful once;
Are his sole aim, and all his glory, now.
Man in society is like a flower
Blown in its native bed: 'tis there alone
His faculties, expanded in full bloom,

Shine out; there only reach their proper use.
But man, associated and leagued with man
By regal warrant, or self-joined by bond
For interest sake, or swarming into clans
Beneath one head, for purposes of war,
Like flowers selected from the rest, and bound
And bundled close to fill some crowded vase,
Fades rapidly, and, by compression marred,
Contracts defilement not to be endured.
Hence chartered boroughs are such public plagues;
And burghers, men immaculate perhaps
In all their private functions, once combined,
Become a loathsome body, only fit
For dissolution, hurtful to the main.
Hence merchants, unimpeachable of sin
Against the charities of domestic life,
Incorporated, seem at once to lose
Their nature; and, disclaiming all regard
For mercy and the common rights of man,
Build factories with blood, conducting trade
At the sword's point, and dying the white robe
Of innocent commercial Justice red.
Hence too the field of glory, as the world
Misdeems it, dazzled by its bright array,
With all its majesty of thundering pomp,
Enchanting music and immortal wreaths,
Is but a school, where thoughtlessness is taught
On principle, where foppery atones
For folly, gallantry for every vice.
But slighted as it is, and by the great
Abandoned, and, which still I more regret,
Infected with the manners and the modes
It knew not once, the country wins me still.
I never framed a wish, or formed a plan,
That flattered me with hopes of earthly bliss,
But there I laid the scene. There early strayed
My fancy, ere yet liberty of choice
Had found me, or the hope of being free.
My very dreams were rural; rural too
The first-born efforts of my youthful muse,
Sportive and jingling her poetic bells,
Ere yet her ear was mistress of their powers.
No bard could please me but whose lyre was tuned
To Nature's praises. Heroes and their feats
Fatigued me, never weary of the pipe
Of Tityrus, assembling, as he sang,
The rustic throng beneath his favourite beech.
Then Milton had indeed a poet's charms:
New to my taste his Paradise surpassed
The struggling efforts of my boyish tongue
To speak its excellence. I danced for joy.
I marvelled much, that, at so ripe an age
As twice seven years, his beauties had then first
Engaged my wonder; and admiring still,
And still admiring, with regret supposed
The joy half lost, because not sooner found.
There too enamoured of the life I loved,
Pathetic in its praise, in its pursuit
Determined, and possessing it at last
With transports, such as favoured lovers feel,
I studied, prized, and wished that I had known
Ingenious Cowley! and, though now reclaimed
By modern lights from an erroneous taste,
I can not but lament thy splendid wit
Entangled in the cobwebs of the schools.
I still revere thee, courtly though retired!
Though stretched at ease in Chertsey's silent bowers,
Not unemployed; and finding rich amends
For a lost world in solitude and verse.
'Tis born with all: the love of Nature's works
Is an ingredient in the compound man
Infused at the creation of the kind.
And, though th' Almighty Maker has throughout
Discriminated each from each, by strokes
And touches of his hand, with so much art
Diversified, that two were never found
Twins at all points—yet this obtains in all,
That all discern a beauty in his works,
And all can taste them: minds that have been formed
And tutored with a relish more exact,
But none without some relish, none unmoved.
It is a flame, that dies not even there,
Where nothing feeds it: neither business, crowds,
Nor habits of luxurious city life,
Whatever else they smother of true worth
In human bosoms, quench it or abate.
The villas with which London stands begirt,
Like a swarth Indian, with his belt of beads,
Prove it. A breath of unadulterate air,
The glimpse of a green pasture, how they cheer
The citizen, and brace his languid frame!
E'en in the stifling bosom of the town,
A garden, in which nothing thrives, has charms
That soothe the rich possessor; much consoled,
That here and there some sprigs of mournful mint,
Of nightshade, or valerian, grace the well
He cultivates. These serve him with a hint,
That nature lives; that sight-refreshing green
Is still the livery she delights to wear,
Though sickly samples of th' exuberant whole
What are the casements lined with creeping herbs
The prouder sashes fronted with a range
Of orange, myrtle, or the fragrant weed,
The Frenchman's darling?* are they not all proofs
That man, immured in cities, still retains
His inborn inextinguishable thirst
Of rural scenes, compensating his loss
By supplemental shifts, the best he may?
The most unfurnished with the means of life,
And they, that never pass their brick-wall bounds,
To range the fields, and treat their lungs with air,
Yet feel the burning instinct: over head
Suspend their crazy boxes, planted thick

* Mignonnette.

And watered duly. There the pitcher stands
A fragment, and the spoutless tea-pot there;
Sad witnesses how close-pent man regrets
The country, with what ardour he contrives
A peep at Nature, when he can no more.

Hail, therefore, patroness of health and ease,
And contemplation, heart consoling joys,
And harmless pleasures, in the thronged abode
Of multitudes unknown; hail, rural life!
Address himself who will to the pursuit
Of honours, or emolument, or fame;
I shall not add myself to such a chase,
Thwart his attempts, or envy his success.
Some must be great. Great offices will have
Great talents. And God gives to every man
The virtue, temper, understanding, taste,
That lifts him into life, and lets him fall
Just in the niche he was ordained to fill.
To the deliverer of an injured land
He gives a tongue t' enlarge upon, a heart
To feel, and courage to redress her wrongs;
To monarchs dignity; to judges sense;
To artists ingenuity and skill;
To me, an unambitious mind, content
In the low vale of life, that early felt
A wish for ease and leisure, and ere long
Found here that leisure, and that ease I wished.

The Task.

BOOK V.

THE WINTER MORNING WALK.

ARGUMENT.

A frosty morning.—The foddering of cattle.—The woodman and his dog.—The poultry.—Whimsical effects of frost at a waterfall.—The empress of Russia's palace of ice.—Amusements of monarchs.—War, one of them.—Wars, whence.—And whence monarchy.—The evils of it.—English and French loyalty contrasted.—The Bastile, and a prisoner there.—Liberty the chief recommendation of this country.—Modern patriotism questionable, and why.—The perishable nature of the best human institutions.—Spiritual liberty not perishable.—The slavish state of man by nature.—Deliver him, Deist, if you can.—Grace must do it.—The respective merits of patriots and martyrs stated.—Their different treatment.—Happy freedom of the man whom grace makes free.—His relish of the works of God.—Address to the Creator.

'Tis morning; and the sun, with ruddy orb
Ascending, fires th' horizon; while the clouds,
That crowd away before the driving wind,
More ardent as the disk emerges more,
Resemble most some city in a blaze,
Seen through the leafless wood. His slanting ray
Slides ineffectual down the snowy vale,
And, tinging all with his own rosy hue,
From every herb and every spiry blade
Stretches a length of shadow o'er the field.
Mine, spindling into longitude immense,
In spite of gravity, and sage remark
That I myself am but a fleeting shade,
Provokes me to a smile. With eye askance
I view the muscular proportioned limb
Transformed to a lean shank. The shapeless pair,
As they designed to mock me, at my side
Take step for step; and, as I near approach
The cottage, walk along the plastered wall,
Preposterous sight! the legs without the man.
The verdure of the plain lies buried deep
Beneath the dazzling deluge; and the bents,
And coarser grass, upspearing o'er the rest,
Of late unsightly and unseen, now shine
Conspicuous, and in bright apparel clad,
And, fledged with icy feathers, not superb.
The cattle mourn in corners, where the fence
Screens them, and seem half petrified to sleep
In unrecumbent sadness. There they wait
Their wonted fodder; not like hungering man,
Fretful if unsupplied; but silent, meek,
And patient of the slow paced swain's delay.
He from the stack carves out th' accustomed load,
Deep-plunging, and again deep-plunging oft,
His broad keen knife into the solid mass;
Smooth as a wall the upright remnant stands,
With such undeviating and even force
He severs it away: no needless care,
Lest storms should overset the leaning pile
Deciduous, or its own unbalanced weight.
Forth goes the woodman, leaving unconcerned
The cheerful haunts of man; to wield the axe,
And drive the wedge, in yonder forest drear,
From morn to eve his solitary task.
Shaggy, and lean, and shrewd, with pointed ears,
And tail cropped short, half lurcher and half cur
His dog attends him. Close behind his heel
Now creeps he slow; and now, with many a frisk
Wide-scampering, snatches up the drifted snow
With ivory teeth, or ploughs it with his snout;
Then shakes his powdered coat, and barks for joy.
Heedless of all his pranks, the sturdy churl
Moves right toward the mark; nor stops for aught
But now and then with pressure of his thumb
T' adjust the fragrant charge of a short tube,
That fumes beneath his nose; the trailing cloud
Streams far behind him, scenting all the air.
Now from the roots, or from the neighbouring pale,

Where, diligent to catch the first faint gleam
Of smiling day, they gossip'd side by side,
Come trooping at the housewife's well-known call
The feathered tribes domestic. Half on wing,
And half on foot, they brush the fleecy flood,
Conscious and fearful of too deep a plunge.
The sparrows peep, and quit the sheltering eaves,
To seize the fair occasion; well they eye
The scattered grain, and thievishly resolved
T' escape th' impending famine, often scared
As oft return, a pert voracious kind.
Clean riddance quickly made, one only care
Remains to each, the search of sunny nook,
Or shed impervious to the blast. Resigned
To sad necessity, the cock foregoes
His wonted strut; and wading at their head
With well-considered steps, seems to resent
His altered gait and stateliness retrenched.
How find the myriads, that in summer cheer
The hills and valleys with their ceaseless songs,
Due sustenance, or where subsist they now?
Earth yields them nought: th' imprisoned worm is safe
Beneath the frozen clod; all seeds of herbs
Lie covered close; and berry-bearing thorns,
That feed the thrush, (whatever some suppose)
Afford the smaller minstrels no supply.
The long protracted rigour of the year
Thins all their numerous flocks. In chinks and holes
Ten thousand seek an unmolested end,
As instinct prompts; self-buried ere they die.
The very rooks and daws forsake the fields,
Where neither grub, nor root, nor earth-nut, now
Repays their labour more; and perched aloft
By the wayside, or stalking in the path.
Lean pensioners upon the traveller's track,
Pick up their nauseous dole, though sweet to them,
Of voided pulse or half-digested grain.
The streams are lost amid the splendid blank,
O'erwhelming all distinction. On the flood,
Indurated and fixed, the snowy weight
Lies undissolved; while silently beneath,
And unperceived, the current steals away.
Not so where, scornful of a check, it leaps
The mill-dam, dashes on the restless wheel,
And wantons in the pebbly gulf below:
No frost can bind it there; its utmost force
Can but arrest the light and smoky mist,
That in its fall the liquid sheet throws wide.
And see where it has hung the embroidered banks
With forms so various, that no powers of art,
The pencil or the pen, may trace the scene!
Here glittering turrets rise, upbearing high
(Fantastic misarrangement!) on the roof
Large growth of what may seem the sparkling trees
And shrubs of fairy land. The crystal drops,
That trickle down the branches, fast congealed,
Shoot into pillars of pellucid length,
And prop the pile they but adorned before.
Here grotto within grotto safe defies
The sunbeam; there, embossed and fretted wild,
The growing wonder takes a thousand shapes
Capricious, in which fancy seeks in vain
The likeness of some object seen before.
Thus Nature works as if to mock at Art,
And in defiance of her rival powers;
By these fortuitous and random strokes
Performing such inimitable feats,
As she with all her rules can never reach.
Less worthy of applause, though more admired,
Because a novelty, the work of man,
Imperial mistress of the fur-clad Russ,
Thy most magnificent and mighty freak,
The wonder of the North. No forest fell,
When thou wouldst build; no quarry sent his stores
T' enrich thy walls: but thou didst hew the floods,
And make thy marble of the glassy wave.
In such a palace Aristæus found
Cyrene, when he bore the plaintiff tale
Of his lost bees to her maternal ear;
In such a palace Poetry might place
The armory of Winter; where his troops,
The gloomy clouds, find weapons, arrowy sleet,
Skin-piercing volley, blossom-bruising hail,
And snow, that often blinds the traveller's course,
And wraps him in an unexpected tomb.
Silently as a dream the fabric rose;
No sound of hammer or of saw was there:
Ice upon ice, the well-adjusted parts
Were soon conjoined, nor other cement asked
Than water interfused to make them one.
Lamps gracefully disposed, and of all hues,
Illumined every side: a watery light
Gleamed through the clear transparency, that seemed
Another moon new risen, or meteor fallen
From Heaven to Earth, of lambent flame serene.
So stood the brittle prodigy; though smooth
And slippery the materials, yet frost-bound
Firm as a rock. Nor wanted aught within,
That royal residence might well befit,
For grandeur or for use. Long wavy wreaths
Of flowers that feared no enemy but warmth,
Blushed on the pannels. Mirror needed none
Where all was vitreous; but in order due
Convivial table and commodious seat
(What seemed at least commodious seat) were there;
Sofa, and couch, and high-built throne august.
The same lubricity was found in all.
And all was moist to the warm touch; a scene
Of evanescent glory, once a stream,
And soon to slide into a stream again.
Alas! 'twas but a mortifying stroke
Of undeserved severity that glanced

(Made by a monarch) on her own estate,
On human grandeur and the courts of kings.
'Twas transient in its nature, as in show
'Twas durable; as worthless as it seemed
Intrinsically precious; to the foot
Treacherous and false; it smiled, and it was cold.
Great princes have great playthings. Some have played
At hewing mountains into men, and some
At building human wonders mountain high.
Some have amused the dull, sad years of life,
(Life spent in indolence, and therefore sad)
With schemes of monumental fame; and sought
By pyramids and mausolean pomp,
Short-lived themselves, t' immortalize their bones.
Some seek diversion in the tented field,
And make the sorrows of mankind their sport.
But war's a game, which, were their subjects wise,
Kings would not play at. Nations would do well
T' extort their truncheons from the puny hands
Of heroes, whose infirm and baby minds
Are gratified with mischief; and who spoil,
Because men suffer it, their toy the world.
When Babel was confounded, and the great
Confederacy of projectors wild and vain
Was split into diversity of tongues,
Then, as a shepherd separates his flock,
These to the upland, to the valley those,
God drave asunder, and assigned their lot
To all the nations. Ample was the boon
He gave them, in his distribution fair
And equal; and he bade them dwell in peace.
Peace was awhile their care: they ploughed and sowed,
And reaped their plenty without grudge or strife.
But violence can never longer sleep,
Than human passions please. In every heart
Are sown the sparks, that kindle fiery war:
Occasion needs but fan them, and they blaze.
Cain had already shed a brother's blood:
The deluge washed it out; but left unquenched
The seeds of murder in the breast of man.
Soon by a righteous judgment in the line
Of his descending progeny was found
The first artificer of death; the shrewd
Contriver, who first sweated at the forge,
And forced the blunt and yet unbloodied steel
To a keen edge, and made it bright for war.
Him Tubal named, the Vulcan of old times,
The sword and falchion their inventor claim;
And the first smith was the first murderer's son.
His art survived the waters; and ere long,
When man was multiplied and spread abroad
In tribes and clans, and had begun to call
These meadows, and that range of hills his own,
The tasted sweets of property begat
Desire of more, and industry in some,
T' improve and cultivate their just demesne,
Made others covet what they saw so fair.
Thus war began on earth: these fought for spoil,
And those in self-defence. Savage at first
The onset, and irregular. At length
One eminent above the rest for strength,
For stratagem, for courage, or for all,
Was chosen leader; him they served in war,
And him in peace, for sake of warlike deeds
Reverenced no less. Who could with him compare?
Or who so worthy to control themselves,
As he, whose prowess had subdued their foes?
Thus war, affording field for the display
Of virtue, made one chief, whom times of peace,
Which have their exigencies too, and call
For skill in government, at length made king.
King was a name too proud for man to wear
With modesty and meekness; and the crown,
So dazzling in their eyes, who set it on,
Was sure t' intoxicate the brows it bound.
It is the abject property of most,
That, being parcel of the common mass,
And destitute of means to raise themselves,
They sink, and settle lower than they need.
They know not what it is to feel within
A comprehensive faculty, that grasps
Great purposes with ease, that turns and wields,
Almost without an effort, plans too vast
For their conception, which they can not move.
Conscious of impotence they soon grow drunk
With gazing, when they see an able man
Step forth to notice: and, besotted thus,
Build him a pedestal, and say, "Stand there,
And be our admiration and our praise."
They roll themselves before him in the dust,
Then most deserving, in their own account,
When most extravagant in his applause,
As if exalting him they raised themselves.
Thus by degrees, self-cheated of their sound
And sober judgment, that he is but man,
They demi-deify and fume him so,
That in due season he forgets it too.
Inflated and astrut with self- conceit,
He gulps the windy diet; and ere long,
Adopting their mistake, profoundly thinks
The world was made in vain, if not for him.
Thenceforth they are his cattle; drudges, born
To bear his burthens, drawing in his gears,
And sweating in his service, his caprice
Becomes the soul that animates them all.
He deems a thousand, or ten thousand, lives,
Spent in the purchase of renown for him,
An easy reckoning; and they think the same.
Thus kings were first invented, and thus kings
Were burnished into heroes, and became
The arbiters of this terraqueous swamp;
Storks among frogs, that have but croaked and died.

Strange, that such folly, as lifts bloated man
To eminence fit only for a god,
Should ever drivel out of human lips,
E'en in the cradled weakness of the world!
Still stranger much, that when at length mankind
Had reached the sinewy firmness of their youth,
And could discriminate and argue well
On subjects more mysterious, they were yet
Babes in the cause of freedom, and should fear
And quake before the gods themselves had made;
But above measure strange, that neither proof
Of sad experience, nor example set
By some, whose patriot virtue has prevailed,
Can even now, when they are grown mature
In wisdom, and with philosophic deeds
Familiar, serve t' emancipate the rest!
Such dupes are men to custom, and so prone
To reverence what is ancient, and can plead
A course of long observance for its use,
That even servitude, the worst of ills,
Because delivered down from sire to son,
Is kept and guarded as a sacred thing.
But is it fit, or can it bear the shock
Of rational discussion, that a man,
Compounded and made up like other men
Of elements tumultuous, in whom lust
And folly in as ample measure meet,
As in the bosoms of the slaves he rules,
Should be a despot absolute, and boast
Himself the only freeman of his land?
Should, when he pleases, and on whom he will,
Wage war, with any or with no pretence
Of provocation given, or wrong sustained,
And force the beggarly last doit by means
That his own humour dictates, from the clutch
Of Poverty, that thus he may procure
His thousands, weary of penurious life,
A splendid opportunity to die?
Say ye, who (with less prudence than of old
Jotham ascribed to his assembling trees
In politic convention) put your trust
I' th' shadow of a bramble, and reclined
In fancied peace beneath his dangerous branch,
Rejoice in him; and celebrate his sway,
Where find ye passive fortitude? Whence springs
Your self-denying zeal, that holds it good,
To stroke the prickly grievance, and to hang
His thorns with streamers of continual praise?
We too are friends to loyalty. We love
The king, who loves the law, respects his bounds
And reigns content within them: him we serve
Freely and with delight, who leaves us free:
But recollecting still, that he is man,
We trust him not too far. King though he be,
And king in England too, he may be weak,
And vain enough to be ambitious still;
May exercise amiss his proper powers,
Or covet more than freemen choose to grant:
Beyond that mark is treason. He is ours,
T' administer, to guard, t' adorn the state,
But not to warp or change it. We are his,
To serve him nobly in the common cause,
True to the death, but not to be his slaves.
Mark now the difference, ye that boast your love
Of kings, between your loyalty and ours.
We love the man, the paltry pageant you:
We the chief patron of the commonwealth,
You the regardless author of its woes:
We for the sake of liberty a king,
You chains and bondage for a tyrant's sake.
Our love is principle, and has its root
In reason, is judicious, manly, free;
Yours, a blind instinct, crouches to the rod,
And licks the foot that treads it in the dust.
Were kingship as true treasure as it seems,
Sterling and worthy of a wise man's wish,
I would not be a king to be beloved
Causeless, and daubed with undiscerning praise,
Where love is mere attachment to the throne,
Not to the man, who fills it as he ought.
Whose freedom is by sufferance, and at will
Of a superior, he is never free.
Who lives, and is not weary of a life
Exposed to manacles, deserves them well.
The state, that strives for liberty, though foiled,
And forced t' abandon what she bravely sought,
Deserves at least applause for her attempt
And pity for her loss. But that's a cause
Not often unsuccessful: power usurped
Is weakness when opposed; conscious of wrong,
'Tis pusillanimous and prone to flight.
But slaves, that once conceive the glowing thought
Of freedom, in that hope itself possess
All that the contest calls for; spirit, strength,
The scorn of danger, and united hearts;
The surest presage of the good they seek.*
Then shame to manhood, and opprobrious more
To France than all her losses and defeats,
Old or of later date, by sea or land,
Her house of bondage, worse than that of old
Which God avenged on Pharaoh—the Bastille.
Ye horrid towers, the abode of broken hearts;
Ye dungeons and ye cages of despair,
That monarchs have supplied from age to age
With music, such as suits their sovereign ears,
The sighs and groans of miserable men!
There's not an English heart that would not leap
To hear that ye were fallen at last; to know
That e'en our enemies, so oft employed
In forging chains for us, themselves were free.
For he, who values Liberty, confines
His zeal for her predominance within

* The author hopes, that he shall not be censured for unnecessary warmth upon so interesting a subject. He is aware, that it is become almost fashionable to stigmatize such sentiments as no better than empty declamation; but it is an ill symptom, and peculiar to modern times.

No narrow bounds; her cause engages him
Wherever pleaded. 'Tis the cause of man.
There dwell the most forlorn of human kind,
Immured though unaccused, condemned untried,
Cruelly spared, and hopeless of escape.
There, like the visionary emblem seen
By him of Babylon, life stands a stump,
And, filleted about with hoops of brass,
Still lives, though all his pleasant boughs are gone
To count the hour-bell and expect no change;
And ever as the sullen sound is heard,
Still to reflect, that, though a joyless note
To him, whose moments all have one dull pace,
Ten thousand rovers in the world at large
Account it music; that it summons some
To theatre, or jocund feast or ball;
The wearied hireling finds it a release
From labour; and the lover, who has chid
Its long delay, feels every welcome stroke
Upon his heart-strings, trembling with delight—
To fly for refuge from distracting thought
To such amusements as ingenious wo
Contrives, hard-shifting, and without her tools—
To read engraven on the mouldy walls,
In staggering types, his predecessor's tale,
A sad memorial, and subjoin his own—
To turn purveyor to an overgorged
And bloated spider, till the pampered pest
Is made familiar, watches his approach,
Comes at his call, and serves him for a friend—
To wear out time in numbering to and fro
The studs, that thick emboss his iron door;
Then downward and then upward, then aslant
And then alternate; with a sickly hope
By dint of change to give his tasteless task
Some relish; till the sum, exactly found
In all directions, he begins again—
Oh comfortless existence! hemmed around
With woes, which who that suffers would not kneel
And beg for exile, or the pangs of death?
That man should thus encroach on fellow-man,
Abridge him of his just and native rights,
Eradicate him, tear him from his hold
Upon the endearments of domestic life
And social, nip his fruitfulness and use,
And doom him for perhaps a heedless word
To barrenness, and solitude, and tears,
Moves indignation, makes the name of king
(Of king whom such prerogative can please)
As dreadful as the Manichean god:
Adored through fear, strong only to destroy.
'Tis liberty alone that gives the flower
Of fleeting life its lustre and perfume;
And we are weeds without it. All constraint,
Except what wisdom lays, on evil men,
Is evil: hurts the faculties, impedes
Their progress in the road of science, blinds
The eyesight of Discovery; and begets,
In those that suffer it, a sordid mind,
Bestial, a meagre intellect, unfit
To be the tenant of man's noble form.
Thee therefore still, blame-worthy as thou art,
With all thy loss of empire, and though squeezed
By public exigence, till annual food
Falls for the craving hunger of the state,
Thee I account still happy, and the chief
Among the nations, seeing thou art free;
My native nook of earth! Thy clime is rude,
Replete with vapours, and disposes much
All hearts to sadness, and none more than mine:
Thine unadulterate manners are less soft
And plausible than social life requires.
And thou hast need of discipline and art,
To give thee what politer France receives
From nature's bounty—that humane address
And sweetness, without which no pleasure is
In converse, either starved by cold reserve,
Or flushed with fierce dispute, a senseless brawl.
Yet being free I love thee: for the sake
Of that one feature can be well content,
Disgraced as thou hast been, poor as thou art,
To seek no sublunary rest beside.
But, once enslaved, farewell! I could endure
Chains no where patiently; and chains at home,
Where I am free by birthright, not at all.
Then what were left of roughness in the grain
Of British natures, wanting its excuse
That it belongs to freemen, would disgust
And shock me. I should then with double pain
Feel all the rigour of thy fickle clime;
And if I must bewail the blessing lost,
For which our Hampdens and our Sidneys bled,
I would at least bewail it under skies
Milder, among a people less austere;
In scenes, which, having never known me free,
Would not reproach me with the loss I felt.
Do I forebode impossible events,
And tremble at vain dreams? Heaven grant I may!
But th' age of virtuous politics is past,
And we are deep in that of cold pretence.
Patriots are grown too shrewd to be sincere,
And we too wise to trust them. He that takes
Deep in his soft credulity the stamp
Designed by loud declaimers on the part
Of liberty, themselves the slaves of lust,
Incurs derision for his easy faith,
And lack of knowledge, and with cause enough:
For when was public virtue to be found
Where private was not? Can he love the whole
Who loves no part? He be a nation's friend,
Who is in truth the friend of no man there?
Can he be strenuous in his country's cause,
Who slights the charities, for whose dear sake
That country, if at all, must be beloved?
'Tis therefore sober and good men are sad
For England's glory, seeing it wax pale
And sickly, while her champions wear their hear

So loose to private duty, that no brain,
Healthful and undisturbed by factious fumes,
Can dream them trusty to the general weal.
Such were not they of old, whose tempered blades
Dispersed the shackles of usurped control,
And hewed them link from link; then Albion's sons
Were sons indeed: they felt a filial heart
Beat high within them at a mother's wrongs;
And, shining each in his domestic sphere,
Shone brighter still, once called to public view.
'Tis therefore many, whose sequestered lot
Forbids their interference, looking on,
Anticipate perforce some dire event;
And, seeing the old castle of the state,
That promised once more firmness, so assailed,
That all its tempest-beaten turrets shake,
Stand motionless expectants of its fall.
All has its date below; the fatal hour
Was registered in heaven ere time began.
We turn to dust, and all our mightiest works
Die too: the deep foundations that we lay,
Time ploughs them up, and not a trace remains.
We build with what we deem eternal rock:
A distant age asks where the fabric stood;
And in the dust, sifted and searched in vain,
The undiscoverable secret sleeps.

But there is yet a liberty, unsung
By poets, and by senators unpraised,
Which monarchs can not grant, nor all the powers
Of earth and hell confederate take away:
A liberty, which persecution, fraud,
Oppression, prisons, have no power to bind;
Which whoso tastes can be enslaved no more.
'Tis liberty of heart derived from Heaven,
Bought with *his* blood, who gave it to mankind,
And sealed with the same token. It is held
By charter, and that charter sanctioned sure
By th' unimpeachable and awful oath
And promise of a God. His other gifts
All bear the royal stamp, that speaks them his,
And are august; but this transcends them all.
His other works, the visible display
Of all creating energy and might,
Are grand, no doubt, and worthy of the word,
That finding an interminable space
Unoccupied, has filled the void so well,
And made so sparkling what was dark before.
But these are not his glory. Man, 'tis true,
Smit with the beauty of so fair a scene,
Might well suppose th' artificer divine
Meant it eternal, had he not himself
Pronounced it transient, glorious as it is,
And still designing a more glorious far,
Doomed it as insufficient for his praise.
These therefore are occasional, and pass;
Formed for the confutation of the fool,
Whose lying heart disputes against a God;
That office served, they must be swept away.
Not so the labours of his love; they shine
In other heavens than these that we behold,
And fade not. There is Paradise that fears
No forfeiture, and of its fruits he sends
Large prelibation oft to saints below.
Of these the first in order, and the pledge,
And confident assurance of the rest,
Is liberty; a flight into his arms,
Ere yet morality's fine threads give way,
A clear escape from tyrannizing lust,
And full immunity from penal wo.

Chains are the portion of revolted man,
Stripes and a dungeon; and his body serves
The triple purpose. In that sickly, foul,
Opprobrious residence he finds them all.
Propense his heart to idols, he is held
In silly dotage on created things,
Careless of their Creator. And that low
And sordid gravitation of his powers
To a vile clod so draws him, with such force
Resistless from the centre he should seek,
That he at last forgets it. All his hopes
Tend downward; his ambition is to sink,
To reach a depth profounder still, and still
Profounder, in the fathomless abyss
Of folly, plunging in pursuit of death.
But ere he gain the comfortless repose
He seeks, and acquiescence of his soul
In Heaven-renouncing exile, he endures—
What does he not, from lusts opposed in vain,
And self-reproaching conscience? He foresees
The fatal issue to his health, fame, peace,
Fortune and dignity; the loss of all
That can ennoble man, and make frail life,
Short as it is, supportable. Still worse,
Far worse than all the plagues, with which his sins
Infect his happiest moments, he forebodes
Ages of hopeless misery. Future death,
And death still future. Not a hasty stroke,
Like that which sends him to the dusty grave;
But unrepealable enduring death.
Scripture is still a trumpet to his fears;
What none can prove a forgery may be true;
What none but bad men wish exploded must.
That scruple checks him. Riot is not loud
Nor drunk enough to drown it. In the midst
Of laughter his compunctions are sincere;
And he abhors the jest by which he shines.
Remorse begets reform. His master lust
Falls first before his resolute rebuke,
And seems dethroned and vanquished. Peace ensues,
But spurious and short-lived; the puny child
Of self-congratulating Pride, begot
On fancied Innocence. Again he falls,
And fights again; but finds his best essay
A presage ominious, portending still
Its own dishonour by a worse relapse,
Till Nature, unavailing Nature, foiled

So oft, and wearied in the vain attempt,
Scoffs at her own performance. Reason now
Takes part with appetite, and pleads the cause
Perversely, which of late she so condemned;
With shallow shifts and old devices, worn
And tattered in the service of debauch,
Covering his shame from his offended sight.
Hath God indeed given appetites to man,
And stored the earth so plenteously with means,
To gratify the hunger of his wish;
"And doth he reprobate, and will he damn
The use of his own bounty? making first
So frail a kind, and then enacting laws
So strict, that less than perfect must despair?
Falsehood! which whoso but suspects of truth
Dishonours God, and makes a slave of man.
Do they themselves, who undertake for hire
The teacher's office, and dispense at large
Their weekly dole of edifying strains,
Attend to their own music? have they faith
In what with such solemnity of tone
And gesture they propound to our belief?
Nay—conduct hath the loudest tongue. The voice
Is but an instrument, on which the priest
May play what tune he pleases. In the deed,
The unequivocal, authentic deed,
We find sound argument, we read the heart."
Such reasonings (if that name must needs belong
T' excuses in which reason has no part)
Serve to compose a spirit well inclined
To live on terms of amity with vice,
And sin without disturbance. Often urged
(As often as libidinous discourse
Exhausted, he resorts to solemn themes
Of theological and grave import)
They gain at last his unreserved assent;
Till, hardened his heart's temper in the forge
Of lust, and the anvil of despair,
He slights the strokes of conscience. Nothing moves,
Or nothing much, his constancy in ill;
Vain tampering has but fostered his disease;
'Tis desperate, and he sleeps the sleep of death.
Haste, now, philosopher, and set him free.
Charm the deaf serpent wisely. Make him hear
Of rectitude and fitness, moral truth
How lovely, and the moral sense how sure,
Consulted and obeyed, to guide his steps
Directly to the *first and only fair*.
Spare not in such a cause. Spend all the powers
Of rant and rhapsody in virtue's praise:
Be most sublimely good, verbosely grand,
And with poetic trappings grace thy prose,
Till it unmantle all the pride of verse.—
Ah, tinkling cymbal, and high-sounding brass,
Smitten in vain! such music can not charm
The eclipse, that intercepts truth's heavenly beam,
And chills and darkens a wide-wandering soul.
The *still small voice* is wanted. He must speak,
Whose word leaps forth at once to its effect;
Who calls for things that are not, and they come
Grace makes the slave a freeman. 'Tis a change,
That turns to ridicule the turgid speech
And stately tone of moralists, who boast,
As if, like him of fabulous renown,
They had indeed ability to smooth
The shag of savage nature, and were each
An Orpheus, and omnipotent in song:
But transformation of apostate man
From fool to wise, from earthly to divine,
Is work for him that made him. He alone,
And he by means in philosophic eyes
Trivial and worthy of disdain, achieves
The wonder; humanizing what is brute
In the lost kind, extracting from the lips
Of asps their venom, overpowering strength
By weakness, and hostility by love.
Patriots have toiled, and in their country's cause
Bled nobly; and their deeds, as they deserve,
Receive proud recompense. We give in charge
Their names to the sweet lyre. Th' historic muse,
Proud of the treasure, marches with it down
To latest times; and Sculpture, in her turn,
Gives bond in stone and ever-during brass
To guard them, and t' immortalize her trust;
But fairer wreaths are due, though never paid,
To those, who, posted at the shrine of Truth,
Have fallen in her defence. A patriot's blood,
Well spent in such a strife, may earn indeed,
And for a time ensure, to his loved land
The sweets of liberty and equal laws;
But martyrs struggle for a brighter prize,
And win it with more pain. Their blood is shed
In confirmation of the noblest claim,
Our claim to feed upon immortal truth,
To walk with God, to be divinely free,
To soar, and to anticipate the skies.
Yet few remember them. They lived unknown,
Till persecution dragged them into fame,
And chased them up to Heaven. Their ashes flew
—No marble tells us whither. With their name
No bard embalms and sanctifies his song:
And history, so warm on meaner themes,
Is cold on this. She execrates indeed
The tyranny that doomed them to the fire,
But gives the glorious sufferers little praise.*
He is the freeman whom the truth makes free,
And all are slaves besides. There's not a chain,
That hellish foes, confederate for his harm,
Can wind around him, but he casts it off
With as much ease as Samson his green withs
He looks abroad into the varied field
Of nature, and though poor perhaps, compared
With those whose mansions glitter in his sight,

* See Hume.

Calls the delightful scenery all his own.
His are the mountains, and the valleys his,
And the resplendent rivers, his t' enjoy
With a propriety that none can feel,
But who, with filial confidence inspired,
Can lift to heaven an unpresumptuous eye,
And smiling say—"My father made them all!"
Are they not his by a peculiar right,
And by an emphasis of interest his,
Whose eye they fill with tears of holy joy,
Whose heart with praise, and whose exalted mind
With worthy thoughts of that unwearied love,
That planned, and built, and still upholds, a world
So clothed with beauty for rebellious man?
Yes—ye may fill your garners, ye that reap
The loaded soil, and ye may waste much good
In senseless riot; but ye will not find
In feast, or in the chase, in song or dance,
A liberty like his, who unimpeached
Of usurpation, and to no man's wrong,
Appropriates nature as his Father's work,
And has a richer use of yours than you.
He is indeed a freeman. Free by birth;
Of no mean city; planned or ere the hills
Were built, the fountains opened, or the sea
With all his roaring multitude of waves.
His freedom is the same in every state;
And no condition of this changeful life,
So manifold in cares, whose every day
Brings its own evil with it, makes it less:
For he has wings, that neither sickness, pain,
Nor penury, can cripple or confine.
No nook so narrow but he spreads them there
With ease, and is at large. Th' oppressor holds
His body bound, but knows not what a range
His spirit takes unconscious of a chain;
And that to bind him is a vain attempt,
Whom God delights in, and in whom he dwells.

Acquaint thyself with God, if thou wouldst taste
His works. Admitted once to his embrace,
Thou shalt perceive that thou wast blind before;
Thine eye shall be instructed; and thine heart
Made pure shall relish, with divine delight,
Till then unfelt, what hands divine have wrought.
Brutes graze the mountain top, with faces prone,
And eyes intent upon the scanty herb
It yields them; or, recumbent on its brow,
Ruminate heedless of the scene outspread
Beneath, beyond, and stretching far away
From inland regions to the distant main.
Man views it and admires; but rests content
With what he views. The landscape has his praise,
But not its Author. Unconcerned who formed
The paradise he sees, he finds it such,
And such well-pleased to find it, asks no more.
Not so the mind, that has been touched from Heaven.
And in the school of sacred wisdom taught
To read his wonders, in whose thought the world,
Fair as it is, existed ere it was.
Not for his own sake merely, but for his
Much more, who fashioned it, he gives it praise;
Praise that from Earth resulting, as it ought
To earth's acknowledged Sovereign, finds at once
Its only just proprietor in Him.
The soul that sees him, or receives sublimed
New faculties, or learns at least t' employ
More worthily the powers she owned before,
Discerns in all things what, with stupid gaze
Of ignorance, till then she overlooked
A ray of heavenly light, gilding all forms
Terrestrial in the vast and the minute;
The unambiguous footsteps of the God.
Who gives its lustre to an insect's wing,
And wheels his throne upon the rolling worlds.
Much conversant with Heaven, she often holds
With those fair ministers of light to man,
That fill the skies nightly with silent pomp,
Sweet conference. Inquires what strains were they
With which Heaven rang, when every star in haste
To gratulate the new-created earth,
Sent forth a voice, and all the sons of God
Shouted for joy.—"Tell me, ye shining hosts,
That navigate a sea that knows no storms,
Beneath a vault unsullied with a cloud,
If from your elevation, whence ye view
Distinctly scenes invisible to man,
And systems of whose birth no tidings yet
Have reached this nether world, ye spy a race
Favoured as ours; transgressors from the womb,
And hasting to a grave, yet doomed to rise,
And to possess a brighter heaven than yours?
As one, who, long detained on foreign shores,
Pants to return, and when he sees afar
His country's weather-bleached and battered rocks
From the green wave emerging, darts an eye
Radiant with joy towards the happy land;
So I with animated hopes behold,
And many an aching wish, your beamy fires,
That show like beacons in the blue abyss,
Ordained to guide th' embodied spirit home
From toilsome life to never-ending rest.
Love kindles as I gaze. I feel desires
That give assurance of their own success,
And that, infused from Heaven, must thither tend."

So reads he nature, whom the lamp of truth
Illuminates. Thy lamp, mysterious Word!
Which whoso sees no longer wanders lost,
With intellects bemazed in endless doubt,
But runs the road of wisdom. Thou hast built,
With means that were not till by thee employed,
Worlds that had never been, hadst thou in strength
Been less, or less benevolent than strong.
They are thy witnesses, who speak thy power

And goodness infinite, but speak in ears
That hear not, or receive not their report.
In vain thy creatures testify of thee,
Till thou proclaim thyself. Theirs is indeed
A teaching voice; but 'tis the praise of thine,
That whom it teaches it makes prompt to learn,
And with the boon gives talents for its use.
Till thou art heard, imaginations vain
Possess the heart, and fables false as hell;
Yet, deemed oracular, lure down to death
The uninformed and heedless souls of men.
We give to chance, blind chance, ourselves as blind,
The glory of thy work which yet appears
Perfect and unimpeachable of blame,
Challenging human scrutiny, and proved
Then skilful most when most severely judged.
But chance is not; or is not where thou reign'st:
Thy providence forbids that fickle power
(If power she be, that works but to confound)
To mix her wild vagaries with thy laws.
Yet thus we dote, refusing while we can
Instruction, and inventing to ourselves
Gods such as guilt makes welcome; gods that sleep,
Or disregard our follies, or that sit
Amused spectators of this bustling stage.
Thee we reject, unable to abide
Thy purity, till pure as thou art pure,
Made such by thee, we love thee for thy cause,
For which we shunned and hated thee before.
Then we are free. Then liberty, like day,
Breaks on the soul, and by a flash from Heaven
Fires all the faculties with glorious joy.
A voice is heard, that mortal ears hear not,
Till thou hast touched them; 'tis the voice of song,
A loud hosanna sent from all thy works,
Which he that hears it with a shout repeats,
And adds his rapture to the general praise.
In that blest moment Nature, throwing wide
Her veil opaque, discloses with a smile
The author of her beauties, who, retired
Behind his own creation, works unseen
By the impure, and hears his power denied.
Thou art the source and centre of all minds,
Their only point of rest, eternal Word!
From thee departing they are lost, and rove
At random without honour, hope, or peace.
From thee is all that soothes the life of man,
His high endeavour, and his glad success,
His strength to suffer, and his will to serve.
But O thou bounteous Giver of all good,
Thou art of all thy gifts thyself the crown!
Give what thou canst, without thee we are poor,
And with thee rich, take what thou wilt away.

The Task.

BOOK VI.

THE WINTER WALK AT NOON.

ARGUMENT.

Bells at a distance.—Their effect.—A fine noon in winter.—A sheltered walk.—Meditation better than books.—Our familiarity with the course of nature makes it appear less wonderful than it is.—The transformation that spring effects in a shrubbery described.—A mistake concerning the course of nature corrected.—God maintains it by an unremitted act.—The amusements fashionable at this hour of the day reproved.—Animals happy, a delightful sight.—Origin of cruelty to animals.—That it is a great crime proved from Scripture. That proof illustrated by a tale.—A line drawn between the lawful and unlawful destruction of them.—Their good and useful properties insisted on.—Apology for the encomiums bestowed by the author on animals.—Instances of man's extravagant praise of man.—The groans of the creation shall have an end.—A view taken of the restoration of all things.—An invocation and an invitation of him, who shall bring it to pass.—The retired man vindicated from the charge of uselessness.—Conclusion.

There is in souls a sympathy with sounds;
And as the mind is pitched the ear is pleased
With melting airs of martial, brisk or grave;
Some chord in unison with what we hear
Is touched within us, and the heart replies.
How soft the music of those village bells,
Falling at intervals upon the ear
In cadence sweet, now dying all away,
Now pealing loud again, and louder still
Clear and sonorous, as the gale comes on!
With easy force it opens all the cells
Where Memory slept. Wherever I have heard
A kindred melody, the scene recurs,
And with it all its pleasures and its pains.
Such comprehensive views the spirit takes,
That in a few short moments I retrace
(As in a map the voyager his course)
The windings of my way through many years.
Short as in retrospect the journey seems,
It seemed not always short; the rugged path,
And prospect oft so dreary and forlorn,
Moved many a sigh at its disheartening length.
Yet feeling present evils, while the past
Faintly impress the mind, or not at all,
How readily we wish time spent revoked,
That we might try the ground again where once

(Through inexperience, as we now perceive)
We missed that happiness we might have found!
Some friend is gone, perhaps his son's best friend,
A father, whose authority, in show
When most severe and mustering all its force,
Was but the graver countenance of love;
Whose favour, like the clouds of spring, might lower,
And utter now and then an awful voice,
But had a blessing in its darkest frown,
Threatening at once and nourishing the plant.
We loved, but not enough, the gentle hand
That reared us. At a thoughtless age, allured
By every gilded folly, we renounced
His sheltering side, and wilfully forewent
That converse, which we now in vain regret.
How gladly would the man recall to life
The boy's neglected sire! a mother too,
That softer friend, perhaps more gladly still,
Might he demand them at the gates of death.
Sorrow has, since they went, subdued and tamed
The playful humour; he could now endure,
(Himself grown sober in the vale of tears)
And feel a parent's presence no restraint.
But not to understand a treasure's worth,
Till time has stolen away the slighted good,
Is cause of half the poverty we feel,
And makes the world the wilderness it is.
The few that pray at all pray oft amiss,
And seeking grace t' improve the prize they hold,
Would urge a wiser suit than asking more.

The night was winter in its roughest mood;
The morning sharp and clear. But now at noon
Upon the southern side of the slant hills,
And where the woods fence off the northern blast,
The season smiles, resigning all its rage,
And has the warmth of May. The vault is blue
Without a cloud, and white without a speck
The dazzling splendour of the scene below.
Again the harmony comes o'er the vale;
And through the trees I view th' embattled tower,
Whence all the music. I again perceive
The soothing influence of the wafted strains,
And settle in soft musings as I tread
The walk, still verdant, under oaks and elms,
Whose outspread branches overarch the glade.
The roof, though moveable through all its length
As the wind sways it, has yet well sufficed,
And, intercepting in their silent fall
The frequent flakes, has kept a path for me.
No noise is here, or none that hinders thought.
The redbreast warbles still, but is content
With slender notes, and more than half suppressed;
Pleased with his solitude, and flitting light
From spray to spay, where'er he rests he shakes
From many a twig the pendant drops of ice,
That tinkle in the withered leaves below.
Stillness, accompanied with sounds so soft,
Charms more than silence. Meditation here
May think down hours to moments. Here the heart
May give a useful lesson to the head,
And learning wiser grow without his books.
Knowledge and Wisdom, far from being one,
Have ofttimes no connexion. Knowledge dwells
In heads replete with thoughts of other men;
Wisdom in minds attentive to their own.
Knowledge, a rude unprofitable mass,
The mere materials with which Wisdom builds,
Till smoothed, and squared, and fitted to its place,
Does but encumber whom it seems t' enrich.
Knowledge is proud that he has learned so much;
Wisdom is humble that he knows no more.
Books are not seldom talismans and spells,
By which the magic art of shrewder wits
Holds an unthinking multitude enthralled.
Some to the fascination of a name
Surrender judgment, hoodwinked. Some the style
Infatuates, and through labyrinths and wilds
Of error leads them, by a tune entranced.
While sloth seduces more, too weak to bear
The insupportable fatigue of thought,
And swallowing therefore without pause or choice,
The total grist unsifted, husks and all.
But trees and rivulets, whose rapid course
Defies the check of winter, haunts of deer,
And sheep-walks populous with bleating lambs,
And lanes in which the primrose ere her time
Peeps through the moss, that clothes the hawthorn root,
Deceive no student. Wisdom there, and truth,
Not shy, as in the world, and to be won
By slow solicitation, seize at once
The roving thought, and fix it on themselves.

What prodigies can power divine perform
More grand than it produces year by year,
And all in sight of inattentive man?
Familiar with the effect we slight the cause,
And in the constancy of nature's course,
The regular return of genial months,
And renovation of a rated world,
See nought to wonder at. Should God again,
As once in Gibeon, interrupt the race
Of the undeviating and punctual sun,
How would the world admire! but speaks it less
An agency divine, to make him know
His moment when to sink and when to rise,
Age after age, than to arrest his course?
All we behold is miracle; but seen
So duly, all is miracle in vain.
Where now the vital energy that moved,
While summer was, the pure and subtle lymph
Through the imperceptible meandering veins
Of leaf and flower? It sleeps; and th' icy touch
Of unprolific winter has impressed
A cold stagnation on th' intestine tide.
But let the months go round, a few short months,

And all shall be restored. These naked shoots,
Barren as lances, among which the wind
Makes wintry music, sighing as it goes,
Shall put their graceful foliage on again,
And more aspiring, and with ampler spread,
Shall boast new charms, and more than they have lost.
Then each in its peculiar honours clad,
Shall publish even to the distant eye
Its family and tribe. Laburnum, rich
In streaming gold; syringa, ivory pure;
The scentless and the scented rose; this red
And of an humbler growth, the other* tall,
And throwing up into the darkest gloom
Of neighbouring cypress, or more sable yew,
Her silver globes, light as the foamy surf
That the wind severs from the broken wave
The lilac, various in array, now white,
Now sanguine, and her beauteous head now set
With purple spikes pyramidal, as if
Studious of ornament, yet unresolved
Which hue she most approved, she chose them all;
Copious of flowers the woodbine, pale and wan
But well compensating her sickly looks
With never-cloying odours, early and late;
Hypericum all bloom, so thick a swarm
Of flowers like flies clothing her slender rods,
That scarce a leaf appears; mezereon too,
Though leafless, well-attired, and thick beset
With blushing wreaths, investing every spray;
Althæa with the purple eye; the broom,
Yellow and bright, as bullion unalloyed,
Her blossoms; and luxuriant above all
The jasmine, throwing wide her elegant sweets,
The deep dark green of whose unvarnished leaf
Makes more conspicuous, and illumines more,
The bright profusions of her scattered stars.—
These have been, and these shall be, in their day;
And all this uniform uncoloured scene
Shall be dismantled of its fleecy load,
And flush into variety again.
From dearth to plenty, and from death to life,
Is Nature's progress, when she lectures man
In heavenly truth; evincing, as she makes
The grand transition, that there lives and works
A soul in all things, and that soul is God.
The beauties of the wilderness are his,
That makes so gay the solitary place,
Where no eye sees them. And the fairer forms,
That cultivation glories in, are his.
He sets the bright procession on its way,
And marshals all the order of the year;
He marks the bounds, which winter may not pass,
And blunts his pointed fury; in its case,
Russet and rude, folds up the tender germ,
Uninjured with inimitable art;
And, ere one flowery season fades and dies,
Designs the blooming wonders of the next.
Some say that in the origin of things,
When all creation started into birth,
The infant elements received a law,
From which they swerved not since. That under force
Of that controlling ordinance they move,
And need not his immediate hand, who first
Prescribed their course, to regulate it now.
Thus dream they, and contrive to save a God
Th' encumbrance of his own concerns, and spare
The great artificer of all that moves
The stress of a continual act, the pain
Of unremitted vigilance and care,
As too laborious and severe a task.
So man, the moth, is not afraid, it seems,
To span omnipotence, and measure might,
That knows no measure, by the scanty rule
And standard of his own, that is to-day,
And is not ere to-morrow's sun go down.
But how should matter occupy a charge,
Dull as it is, and satisfy a law
So vast in its demands, unless impelled
To ceaseless service by a ceaseless force,
And under pressure of some conscious cause?
The Lord of all, himself through all diffused,
Sustains, and is the life of all that lives.
Nature is but a name for an effect,
Whose cause is God. He feeds the sacred fire
By which the mighty process is maintained;
Who sleeps not, is not weary; in whose sight
Slow circling ages are as transient days;
Whose work is without labour; whose designs
No flaw deforms, no difficulty thwarts;
And whose beneficence no change exhausts.
Him blind antiquity profaned, not served,
With self-taught rites, and under various names,
Female and male, Pomona, Pales, Pan,
And Flora, and Vertumnus; peopling earth
With tutelary goddesses and gods,
That were not; and commending as they would
To each some province, garden, field, or grove.
But all are under one. One spirit—His,
Who wore the platted thorns with bleeding brows,—
Rules universal nature. Not a flower
But shows some touch, in freckle, streak, or stain,
Of his unrivalled pencil. He inspires
Their balmy odours, and imparts their hues,
And bathes their eyes with nectar, and includes,
In grains as countless as the seaside sands,
The forms with which he sprinkles all the earth.
Happy who walks with him! whom what he finds
Of flavour or of scent in fruit or flower,
Or what he views of beautiful or grand
In nature, from the broad majestic oak
To the green blade that twinkles in the sun,
Prompts with remembrance of a present God.
His presence, who made all so fair, perceived,

* The Guelder-rose.

Makes all still fairer. As with him no scene
Is dreary, so with him all seasons please.
Though winter had been none, had man been true,
And earth be punished for its tenant's sake,
Yet not in vengeance; as this smiling sky,
So soon succeeding such an angry night,
And these dissolving snows, and this clear stream
Recovering fast its liquid music, prove.
Who then, that has a mind well strung and tuned
To contemplation, and within his reach
A scene so friendly to his favourite task,
Would waste attention at the checkered board,
His host of wooden warriors to and fro
Marching and counter-marching, with an eye
As fixed as marble, with a forehead ridged
And furrowed into storms, and with a hand
Trembling, as if eternity were hung
In balance on his conduct of a pin?
Nor envies he aught more their idle sport,
Who pant with application misapplied
To trivial toys, and pushing ivory balls
Across a velvet level, feel a joy
Akin to rapture, when the bauble finds
Its destined goal, of difficult access.
Nor deems he wiser him, who gives his noon
To Miss, the mercer's plague, from shop to shop
Wandering, and, littering with unfolded silks
The polished counter, and approving none,
Or promising with smiles to call again.
Nor him, who by his vanity seduced,
And soothed into a dream that he discerns
The difference of a Guido from a daub,
Frequents the crowded auction: stationed there
As duly as the Langford of the show,
With glass at eye, and catalogue in hand,
And tongue accomplished in the fulsome cant,
And pedantry, that coxcombs learn with ease;
Oft as the price deciding hammer falls,
He notes it in his book, then raps his box,
Swears 'tis a bargain, rails at his hard fate,
That he has let it pass—but never bids.
Here unmolested, through whatever sign
The sun proceeds, I wander. Neither mist,
Nor freezing sky nor sultry, checking me,
Nor stranger, intermeddling with my joy.
E'en in the spring and playtime of the year,
That calls th' unwonted villager abroad
With all her little ones, a sportive train,
To gather kinecups in the yellow mead,
And prink their hair with daisies, or to pick
A cheap but wholesome salad from the brook,
These shades are all my own. The timorous hare,
Grown so familiar with her frequent guest,
Scarce shuns me; and the stockdove unalarmed
Sits cooing in the pine-tree, nor suspends
His long love-ditty for my near approach.
Drawn from his refuge in some lonely elm,
That age or injury has hollowed deep
Where, on his bed of wool and matted leaves,
He has outslept the winter, ventures forth
To frisk awhile, and bask in the warm sun,
The squirrel, flippant, pert, and full of play;
He sees me, and at once, swift as a bird,
Ascends the neighbouring beech; there whisks his brush,
And perks his ears, and stamps, and cries aloud,
With all the prettiness of feigned alarm,
And anger insignificantly fierce.
The heart is hard in nature and unfit
For human fellowship, as being void
Of sympathy, and therefore dead alike
To love and friendship both, that is not pleased
With sight of animals enjoying life,
Nor feels their happiness augment his own.
The bounding fawn, that darts across the glade,
When none pursues, through mere delight of heart,
And spirits buoyant with excess of glee;
The horse as wanton, and almost as fleet,
That skims the spacious meadow at full speed,
Then stops, and snorts, and, throwing high his heels,
Starts to the voluntary race again;
The very kine, that gambol at high noon,
The total herd receiving first from one,
That leads the dance, a summons to be gay,
Though wild their strange vagaries, and uncouth
Their efforts, yet resolved with one consent
To give such act and utterance as they may
To ecstacy too big to be suppressed—
These, and a thousand images of bliss,
With which kind Nature graces every scene,
Where cruel man defeats not her design,
Impart to the benevolent, who wish
All that are capable of pleasure pleased,
A far superior happiness to theirs,
The comfort of a reasonable joy.
Man scarce had risen, obedient to his call
Who formed him from the dust, his future grave,
When he was crowned as never king was since.
God set the diadem upon his head,
And angel choirs attended. Wondering stood
The new-made monarch, while before him passed,
All happy, and all perfect in their kind,
The creatures, summoned from their various haunts,
To see their sovereign, and confess his sway.
Vast was his empire, absolute his power.
Or bounded only by a law, whose force
'Twas his sublimest privilege to feel
And own, the law of universal love.
He ruled with meekness, they obeyed with joy;
No cruel purpose lurked within his heart,
And no distrust of his intent in theirs.
So Eden was a scene of harmless sport,
Where kindness on his part who ruled the whole
Begat a tranquil confidence in all,
And fear as yet was not, nor cause for fear.
But sin marred all; and the revolt of man,

That source of evils not exhausted yet,
Was punished with revolt of his from him.
Garden of God, how terrible the change
Thy groves and lawns then witnessed! Every heart,
Each animal, of every name, conceived
A jealousy, and an instinctive fear,
And, conscious of some danger, either fled
Precipitate the loathed abode of man,
Or growled defiance in such angry sort,
As taught him too to tremble in his turn.
Thus harmony and family accord
Were driven from Paradise; and in that hour
The seeds of cruelty, that since have swelled
To such gigantic and enormous growth,
Were sown in human nature's fruitful soil.
Hence date the persecution and the pain,
That man inflicts on all inferior kinds,
Regardless of their plaints. To make him sport,
To gratify the frenzy of his wrath,
Or his base gluttony, are causes good
And just in his account, why bird and beast
Should suffer torture, and the streams be dyed
With blood of their inhabitants impaled.
Earth groans beneath the burden of a war
Waged with defenceless innocence, while he,
Not satisfied to prey on all around,
Adds tenfold bitterness to death by pangs
Needless, and first torments ere he devours.
Now happiest they, that occupy the scenes
The most remote from his abhorred resort,
Whom once, as delegate of God on earth,
They feared, and as his perfect image loved.
The wilderness is theirs, with all its caves,
Its hollow glens, its thickets, and its plains,
Unvisited by man. There they are free,
And howl and roar as likes them, uncontrolled:
Nor ask his leave to slumber or to play.
Wo to the tyrant, if he dare intrude
Within the confines of their wild domain:
The lion tells him—I am monarch here—
And, if he spare him, spares him on the terms
Of royal mercy, and through generous scorn
To rend a victim trembling at his foot.
In measure, as by force of instinct drawn,
Or by necessity constrained, they live
Dependant upon man; those in his fields,
These at his crib, and some beneath his roof.
They prove too often at how dear a rate
He sells protection.—Witness at his foot
The spaniel dying for some venial fault,
Under dissection of the knotted scourge;
Witness the patient ox, with stripes and yells
Driven to the slaughter, goaded, as he runs,
To madness; while the savage at his heels
Laughs at the frantic sufferer's fury, spent
Upon the guiltless passenger o'erthrown.
He too is witness, noblest of the train
That wait on man, the flight-performing horse;
With unsuspecting readiness he takes
His murderer on his back, and pushed all day
With bleeding sides and flanks, that heave for life,
To the far distant goal, arrives and dies.
So little mercy shows who needs so much!
Does law, so jealous in the cause of man,
Denounce no doom on the delinquent? None.
He lives, and o'er his brimming beaker boasts
(As if barbarity were high desert)
Th' inglorious feat, and clamorous in praise
Of the poor brute, seems wisely to suppose
The honours of his matchless horse his own.
But many a crime, deemed innocent on earth,
Is registered in heaven; and these no doubt
Have each their record, with a curse annexed.
Man may dismiss compassion from his heart,
But God will never. When he charged the Jew
T' assist his foe's down fallen beast to rise;
And when the bush-exploring boy, that seized
The young, to let the parent bird go free;
Proved he not plainly, that his meaner works
Are yet his care, and have an interest all,
All, in the universal Father's love?
On Noah, and in him on all mankind,
The charter was conferred, by which we hold
The flesh of animals in fee, and claim
O'er all we feed on, power of life and death.
But read the instrument and mark it well:
Th' oppression of a tyrannous control
Can find no warrant there. Feed then, and yield
Thanks for thy food. Carnivorous, through sin,
Feed on the slain, but spare the living brute!

The Governor of all, himself to all
So bountiful, in whose attentive ear
The unfledged raven and the lion's whelp
Plead not in vain for pity on the pangs
Of hunger unassuaged, has interposed,
Not seldom, his avenging arm, to smite
Th' injurious trampler upon nature's law,
That claims forbearance even for a brute.
He hates the hardness of a Balaam's heart;
And prophet as he was, he might not strike
The blameless animal, without rebuke,
On which he rode. Her opportune offence
Saved him, or th' unrelenting seer had died.
He sees that human equity is slack
To interfere, though in so just a cause;
And makes the task his own. Inspiring dumb
And helpless victims with a sense so keen
Of injury, with such knowledge of their strength.
And such sagacity to take revenge,
That oft the beast has seemed to judge the man.
An ancient, not a legendary tale,
By one of sound intelligence rehearsed,
(If such who plead for Providence may seem
In modern eyes,) shall make the doctrine clear.

Where England, stretched towards the setting sun,

Narrow and long, o'erlooks the western wave,
Dwelt young Misagathus; a scorner he
Of God and goodness, atheist in ostent,
Vicious in act, in temper savage-fierce.
He journeyed; and his chance was, as he went,
To join a traveller, of far different note,
Evander, famed for piety, for years
Deserving honour, but for wisdom more.
Fame had not left the venerable man
A stranger to the manners of the youth,
Whose face too was familiar to his view.
Their way was on the margin of the land,
O'er the green summit of the rocks, whose base
Beats back the roaring surge, scarce heard so high.
The charity, that warmed his heart, was moved
At sight of the man-monster. With a smile,
Gentle, and affable, and full of grace,
As fearful of offending whom he wished
Much to persuade, he plied his ear with truths
Not harshly thundered forth, or rudely pressed,
But, like his purpose, gracious, kind, and sweet.
"And dost thou dream," th' impenetrable man
Exclaimed, "that me the lullabies of age,
And fantasies of dotards such as thou,
Can cheat, or move a moment's fear in me?
Mark now the proof I give thee, that the brave
Need no such aids, as superstition lends,
To steel their hearts against the dread of death."
He spoke, and to the precipice at hand
Pushed with a madman's fury. Fancy shrinks
And the blood thrills and curdles, at the thought
Of such a gulf as he designed his grave.
But, though the felon on his back could dare
The dreadful leap, more rational, his steed
Declined the death, and wheeling swiftly round,
Or e'er his hoof had pressed the crumbling verge,
Baffled his rider, saved against his will.
The frenzy of the brain may be redressed
By medicine well applied, but without grace
The heart's insanity admits no cure.
Enraged the more, by what might have reformed
His horrible intent, again he sought
Destruction, with a zeal to be destroyed,
With sounding whip, and rowels dyed in blood.
But still in vain. The Providence that meant
A longer date to the far nobler beast,
Spared yet again th' ignoble for his sake.
And now, his prowess proved, and his sincere
Incurable obduracy evinced,
His rage grew cool; and, pleased perhaps t' have earned
So cheaply the renown of that attempt,
With looks of some complacence he resumed
His road, deriding much the blank amaze
Of good Evander, still where he was left
Fixed motionless, and petrified with dread.
So on they fared. Discourse on other themes
Ensuing seemed t' obliterate the past;
And tamer far for so much fury shown,
(As in the course of rash and fiery men)
The rude companion smiled, as if transformed.
But 'twas a transient calm. A storm was near,
An unsuspected storm. His hour was come.
The impious challenger of Power divine
Was now to learn, that Heaven, though slow to wrath,
Is never with impunity defied.
His horse, as he had caught his master's mood,
Snorting, and starting into sudden rage,
Unbidden, and not now to be controlled,
Rushed to the cliff, and, having reached it, stood.
At once the shock unseated him; he flew
Sheer o'er the craggy barrier; and, immersed
Deep in the flood, found, when he sought it not,
The death he had deserved, and died alone.
So God wrought double justice; made the fool
The victim of his own tremendous choice,
And taught a brute the way to safe revenge.
I would not enter on my list of friends
(Though graced with polished manners and fine sense,
Yet wanting sensibility) the man
Who needlessly sets foot upon a worm.
An inadvertent step may crush the snail,
That crawls at evening in the public path;
But he that has humanity, forewarned,
Will tread aside, and let the reptile live.
The creeping vermin, loathsome to the sight,
And charged perhaps with venom, that intrudes,
A visiter unwelcome, into scenes
Sacred to neatness and repose, th' alcove,
The chamber, or refectory, may die:
A necessary act incurs no blame.
Not so when, held within their proper bounds,
And guiltless of offence, they range the air,
Or take their pastime in the spacious field;
There they are privileged; and he that hunts
Or harms them there is guilty of a wrong,
Disturbs the economy of Nature's realm,
Who, when she formed, designed them an abode.
The sum is this. If man's convenience, health,
Or safety, interfere, his rights and claims
Are paramount, and must extinguish theirs.
Else they are all—the meanest things that are—
As free to live, and to enjoy that life,
As God was free to form them at the first,
Who in his sovereign wisdom made them all.
Ye, therefore, who love mercy, teach your sons
To love it too. The springtime of our years
Is soon dishonoured and defiled in most
By budding ills, and ask a prudent hand
To check them. But alas! none sooner shoots,
If unrestrained, into luxuriant growth,
Than cruelty, most devilish of them all.
Mercy to him that shows it, is the rule
And righteous limitation of its act,
By which Heaven moves in pardoning guilty man:
And he that shows none, being ripe in years,

And conscious of the outrage he commits,
Shall seek it, and not find it, in his turn.

Distinguished much by reason, and still more
By our capacity of grace divine,
From creatures, that exist but for our sake,
Which, having served us, perish, we are held
Accountable; and God some future day
Will reckon with us roundly for the abuse
Of what he deems no mean or trivial trust.
Superior as we are, they yet depend
Not more on human help than we on theirs
Their strength, or speed, or vigilance were given
In aid of our defects. In some are found
Such teachable and apprehensive parts,
That man's attainments in his own concerns,
Matched with th' expertness of the brutes in theirs,
Are oftimes vanquished, and thrown far behind.
Some show that nice sagacity of smell,
And read with such discernment, in the port
And figure of the man, his secret aim,
That oft we owe our safety to a skill
We could not teach, and must despair to learn;
But learn we might, if not too proud to stoop
To quadruped instructers, many a good
And useful quality, and virtue too,
Rarely exemplified among ourselves;
Attachment never to be weaned, or changed
By any change of fortune; proof alike
Against unkindness, absence, and neglect;
Fidelity, that neither bribe nor threat
Can move or warp; and gratitude for small
And trivial favours, lasting as the life,
And glistening even in the dying eye.
Man praises man. Desert in arts or arms
Wins public honour; and ten thousand sit
Patiently present at a sacred song,
Commemoration-mad; content to hear
(O wonderful effect of music's power!)
Messiah's eulogy for Handel's sake.
But less, methinks, than sacrilege might serve—
(For, was it less, what heathen would have dared
To strip Jove's statue of his oaken wreath,
And hang it up in honour of a man?)
Much less might serve, when all that we design
Is but to gratify an itching ear,
And give the day to a musician's praise.
Remember Handel? Who, that was not born
Deaf as the dead to harmony, forgets,
Or can, the more than Homer of his age?
Yes—we remember him: and while we praise
A talent so divine, remember too
That His most holy book, from whom it came,
Was never meant, was never used before,
To buckram out the memory of a man.
But hush!—the muse perhaps is too severe;
And with a gravity beyond the size
And measure of th' offence, rebukes a deed
Less impious than absurd, and owing more
To want of judgment than to wrong design.
So in the chapel of old Ely House,
When wandering Charles, who meant to be the third,
Had fled from William, and the news was fresh,
The simple clerk, but loyal, did announce,
And eke did rear right merrily, two staves,
Sung to the praise and glory of King George!
—Man praises man; and Garrick's memory next,
When time had somewhat mellowed it, and made
The idol of our worship while he lived
The God of our idolatry once more,
Shall have its altar; and the world shall go
In pilgrimage to bow before his shrine.
The theatre too small shall suffocate
Its squeezed contents, and more than it admits
Shall sigh at their exclusion, and return
Ungratified: for there some noble lord
Shall stuff his shoulders with king Richard's bunch,
Or wrap himself in Hamlet's inky cloak,
And strut and storm, and straddle, stamp and stare,
To show the world how Garrick did not act,
For Garrick was a worshipper himself;
He drew the liturgy, and framed the rites
And solemn ceremonials of the day,
And called the world to worship on the banks
Of Avon, famed in song. Ah, pleasant proof
That piety has still in human hearts
Some place, a spark or two not yet extinct.
The mulberry-tree was hung with blooming wreaths;
The mulberry-tree stood centre of the dance;
The mulberry-tree was hymned with dulcet airs;
And from his touchwood trunk the mulberry-tree
Supplied such relics as devotion holds
Still sacred, and preserves with pious care.
So 'twas a hallowed time: decorum reigned,
And mirth without offence. No few returned,
Doubtless, much edified, and all refreshed.—
Man praises man. The rabble all alive
From tippling benches, cellars, stalls, and styes,
Swarm in the streets. The statesman of the day,
A pompous and slow-moving pageant, comes.
Some shout him, and some hang upon his car,
To gaze in's eyes, and bless him. Maidens wave
Their 'kerchiefs, and old women weep for joy:
While others, not so satisfied, unhorse
The gilded equipage, and, turning loose
His steeds, usurp a place they well deserve.
Why? what has charmed them? Hath he saved the state?
No. Doth he purpose its salvation? No.
Enchanting novelty, that moon at full,
That finds out every crevice of the head
That is not sound and perfect, hath in theirs
Wrought this disturbance. But the wane is near,
And his own cattle must suffice him soon.

Thus idly do we waste the breath of praise,
And dedicate a tribute, in its use
And just direction sacred, to a thing
Doomed to the dust, or lodged already there.
Encomium in old time was poets' work;
But poets, having lavishly long since
Exhausted all materials of the art,
The task now falls into the public hand;
And I, contented with an humbler theme,
Have poured my stream of panegyric down
The vale of Nature, where it creeps, and winds
Among her lovely works with a secure
And unambitious course, reflecting clear,
If not the virtues, yet the worth, of brutes.
And I am recompensed, and deem the toils
Of poetry not lost, if verse of mine
May stand between an animal and wo,
And teach one tyrant pity for his drudge.

The groans of Nature in this nether world,
Which Heaven has heard for ages, have an end.
Foretold by prophets, and by poets sung,
Whose fire was kindled at the prophet's lamp,
The time of rest, the promised sabbath, comes.
Six thousand years of sorrow have well-nigh
Fulfilled their tardy and disastrous course
Over a sinful world; and what remains
Of this tempestuous state of human things
Is merely as the working of a sea
Before a calm, that rocks itself to rest.
For He, whose car the winds are, and the clouds
The dust that waits upon his sultry march,
When sin hath moved them, and his wrath is hot,
Shall visit earth in mercy; shall descend
Propitious in his chariot paved with love;
And what his storms have blasted and defaced
For man's revolt shall with a smile repair.

Sweet is the harp of prophecy; too sweet
Not to be wronged by a mere mortal touch:
Nor can the wonders it records be sung
To meaner music, and not suffer loss.
But when a poet, or when one like me,
Happy to rove among poetic flowers,
Though poor in skill to rear them, lights at last,
On some fair theme, some theme divinely fair,
Such is the impulse and the spur he feels,
To give it praise proportioned to its worth,
That not t' attempt it, arduous as he deems
The labour, were a task more arduous still.

O scenes surpassing fable, and yet true,
Scenes of accomplished bliss! which who can see,
Though but in distant prospect, and not feel
His soul refreshed with foretaste of the joy?
Rivers of gladness water all the earth,
And clothe all climes with beauty; the reproach
Of barrenness is past. The fruitful field
Laughs with abundance; and the land, once lean,
Or fertile only in its own disgrace,
Exults to see its thistly curse repealed,
The various seasons woven into one,
And that one season an eternal spring.
The garden fears no blight, and needs no fence,
For there is none to covet, all are full.
The lion, and the libbard, and the bear,
Graze with the fearless flocks; all bask at noon
Together, or all gambol in the shade
Of the same grove, and drink one common stream.
Antipathies are none. No foe to man
Lurks in the serpent now; the mother sees,
And smiles to see, her infant's playful hand
Stretched forth to dally with the crested worm,
To stroke his azure neck, or to receive
The lambent homage of his arrowy tongue.
All creatures worship man, and all mankind
One Lord, one Father. Error has no place:
That creeping pestilence is driven away;
The breath of heaven has chased it. In the heart
No passion touches a discordant string,
But all is harmony and love. Disease
Is not; the pure and uncontaminate blood
Holds its due course, nor fears the frost of age.
One song employs all nations; and all cry,
"Worthy the Lamb, for he was slain for us!"
The dwellers in the vales and on the rocks
Shout to each other, and the mountain tops
From distant mountains catch the flying joy;
Till, nation after nation taught the strain,
Earth rolls the rapturous hosanna round.
Behold the measure of the promise filled;
See Salem built, the labour of a God!
Bright as the sun the sacred city shines;
All kingdoms and all princes of the earth
Flock to that light; the glory of all lands
Flows into her; unbounded is her joy,
And endless her increase. Thy rams are there,
Nebaioth, and the flocks of Kedar there:*
The looms of Ormus, and the mines of Ind,
And Saba's spicy groves pay tribute there.
Praise is in all her gates; upon her walls,
And in her streets, and in her spacious courts
Is heard salvation. Eastern Java there
Kneels with the native of the farthest west
And Æthiopia spreads abroad the hand,
And worships. Her report has travelled forth
Into all lands. From every clime they come
To see thy beauty, and to share thy joy,
O Sion! an assembly such as earth
Saw never, such as heaven stoops down to see.

Thus heavenward all things tend. For all were once
Perfect, and all must be at length restored.
So God has greatly purposed; who could else
In his dishonoured works himself endure
Dishonour, and be wronged without redress.
Haste then, and wheel away a shattered world,

* Nebaioth and Kedar, the sons of Ishmael, and progenitors of the Arabs, in the prophetic scripture here alluded to, may be reasonably considered as representatives of the Gentiles at large.

Ye slow-revolving seasons! we would see
(A sight to which our eyes are strangers yet)
A world, that does not dread and hate his laws,
And suffer for its crime; would learn how fair
The creature is that God pronounces good,
How pleasant in itself what pleases him.
Here every drop of honey hides a sting;
Worms wind themselves into our sweetest flowers;
And e'en the joy, that haply some poor heart
Derives from Heaven, pure as the fountain is,
Is sullied in the stream, taking a taint
From touch of human lips, at best impure.
O for a world in principle as chaste
As this is gross and selfish! over which
Custom and prejudice shall bear no sway,
That govern all things here, shouldering aside
The meek and modest Truth, and forcing her
To seek a refuge from the tongue of strife
In nooks obscure, far from the ways of men;
Where violence shall never lift the sword,
Nor cunning justify the proud man's wrong,
Leaving the poor no remedy but tears;
Where he, that fills an office, shall esteem
Th' occasion it presents of doing good
More than the perquisite: where law shall speak
Seldom, and never but as wisdom prompts
And equity; not jealous more to guard
A worthless form, than to decide aright:
Where fashion shall not sanctify abuse,
Nor smooth good-breeding (supplemental grace)
With lean performance ape the work of love!

Come then, and added to thy many crowns,
Receive yet one, the crown of all the earth,
Thou who alone art worthy! It was thine
By ancient covenant, ere Nature's birth;
And thou hast made it thine by purchase since,
And overpaid its value with thy blood.
Thy saints proclaim thee king; and in their hearts
Thy title is engraven with a pen
Dipped in the fountain of eternal love.
Thy saints proclaim thee king; and thy delay
Gives courage to their foes, who, could they see
The dawn of thy last advent, long-desired,
Would creep into the bowels of the hills,
And flee for safety to the falling rocks.
The very spirit of the world is tired
Of its own taunting question, asked so long,
"Where is the promise of your Lord's approach?"
The infidel has shot his bolts away,
Till, his exhausted quiver yielding none,
He gleans the blunted shafts, that have recoiled,
And aims them at the shield of Truth again.
The veil is rent, rent too by priestly hands,
That hides divinity from mortal eyes;
And all the mysteries to faith proposed,
Insulted and traduced, are cast aside,
As useless, to the moles and to the bats.
They now are deemed the faithful, and are praised,
Who constant only in rejecting thee,
Deny thy Godhead with a martyr's zeal,
And quit their office for their error's sake.
Blind, and in love with darkness! yet, e'en these
Worthy, compared with sycophants, who knee
Thy name adoring, and then preach thee man!
So fares thy church. But how thy church may fare
The world takes little thought. Who will may preach,
And what they will. All pastors are alike
To wandering sheep, resolved to follow none.
Two gods divide them all—Pleasure and Gain;
For these they live, they sacrifice to these,
And in their service wage perpetual war
With conscience and with thee. Lust in their hearts,
And mischief in their hands, they roam the earth
To prey upon each other: stubborn, fierce,
High-minded, foaming out their own disgrace.
Thy prophets speak of such; and, noting down
The features of the last degenerate times,
Exhibit every lineament of these.
Come then, and, added to thy many crowns,
Receive yet one, as radiant as the rest,
Due to thy last and most effectual work,
Thy word fulfilled, the conquest of a world!

He is the happy man, whose life e'en now
Shows somewhat of that happier life to come;
Who, doomed to an obscure but tranquil state,
Is pleased with it, and, were he free to choose,
Would make his fate his choice; whom peace, the fruit
Of virtue, and whom virtue, fruit of faith,
Prepare for happiness; bespeak him one
Content indeed to sojourn while he must,
Below the skies, but having there his home.
The world o'erlooks him in her busy search
Of objects, more illustrious in her view;
And, occupied as earnestly as she,
Though more sublimely, he o'erlooks the world.
She scorns his pleasures, for she knows them not;
He seeks not hers, for he has proved them vain.
He can not skim the ground like summer birds
Pursuing gilded flies; and such she deems
Her honours, her emoluments her joys.
Therefore in contemplation is his bliss,
Whose power is such, that whom she lifts from earth
She makes familiar with a heaven unseen,
And shows him glories yet to be revealed.
Not slothful he, though seeming unemployed,
And censured oft as useless. Stillest streams
Oft water fairest meadows, and the bird
That flutters least is longest on the wing.
Ask him, indeed, what trophies he has raised,
Or what achievements of immortal fame
He purposes, and he shall answer—None.
His warfare is within. There unfatigued
His fervent spirit labours. There he fights,
And there obtains fresh triumphs o'er himself,

And never-withering wreaths, compared with which,
The laurels that a Cæsar reaps are weeds.
Perhaps the self-approving haughty world,
That as she sweeps him with her whistling silks
Scarce deigns to notice him, or, if she see,
Deems him a cipher in the works of God,
Receives advantage from his noiseless hours,
Of which she little dreams. Perhaps she owes
Her sunshine and her rain, her blooming spring
And plenteous harvest, to the prayer he makes,
When, Isaac like, the solitary saint
Walks forth to meditate at eventide,
And think on her, who thinks not for herself.
Forgive him then, thou bustler in concerns
Of little worth, an idler in the best,
If, author of no mischief and some good,
He seek his proper happiness by means
That may advance, but can not hinder, thine.
Nor, though he tread the secret path of life,
Engage no notice, and enjoy much ease,
Account him an encumbrance on the state,
Receiving benefits, and rendering none.
His sphere though humble, if that humble sphere
Shine with his fair example, and though small
His influence, if that influence all be spent
In soothing sorrow, and in quenching strife,
In aiding helpless indigence, in works.
From which at least a grateful few derive
Some taste of comfort in a world of wo;
Then let the supercilious great confess
He serves his country, recompenses well
The state, beneath the shadow of whose vine
He sits secure, and in the scale of life
Holds no ignoble, though a slighted, place.
The man whose virtues are more felt than seen,
Must drop indeed the hope of public praise;
But he may boast, what few that win it can,
That if his country stand not by his skill,
At least his follies have not wrought her fall.
Polite Refinement offers him in vain
Her golden tube, through which a sensual world
Draws gross impurity, and likes it well,
The neat conveyance hiding all th' offence.
Not that he peevishly rejects a mode
Because that world adopts it. If it bear
The stamp and clear impression of good sense,
And be not costly more than of true worth,
He puts it on, and for decorum sake
Can wear it e'en as gracefully as she.
She judges of refinement by the eye,
He by the test of conscience, and a heart
Not soon deceived; aware that what is base
No polish can make sterling; and that vice,
Though well perfumed and elegantly dressed,
Like an unburied carcase tricked with flowers,
Is but a garnished nuisance, fitter far
For cleanly riddance, than for fair attire.
So life glides smoothly and by stealth away,
More golden than that age of fabled gold
Renowned in ancient song; not vexed with care
Or stained with guilt, beneficent, approved
Of God and man, and peaceful in its end.
So glide my life away, and so at last,
My share of duties decently fulfilled,
May some disease, not tardy to perform
Its destined office, yet with gentle stroke,
Dismiss me weary to a safe retreat,
Beneath the turf that I have often trod.
It shall not grieve me then, that once, when called
To dress a Sofa with the flowers of verse,
I played awhile, obedient to the fair,
With that light task; but soon, to please her more
Whom flowers alone I knew would little please,
Let fall th' unfinished wreath, and roved for fruit.
Roved far, and gathered much: some harsh, 'tis true,
Picked from the thorns and briers of reproof,
But wholesome, well digested; grateful some
To palates that can taste immortal truth;
Insipid else, and sure to be despised;
But all is in His hand, whose praise I seek.
In vain the poet sings, and the world hears,
If He regard not, though divine the theme.
'Tis not in artful measures, in the chime
And idle tinkling of a minstrel's lyre,
To charm his ear, whose eye is on the heart;
Whose frown can disappoint the proudest strain,
Whose approbation—prosper even mine.

AN EPISTLE

TO

JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

Dear Joseph—five and twenty years ago—
Alas, how time escapes!—'tis even so—
With frequent intercourse, and always sweet,
And always friendly, we were wont to cheat
A tedious hour—and now we never meet!
As some grave gentlemen in Terence says,
('Twas therefore much the same in ancient days)
Good lack, we know not what to-morrow brings—
Strange fluctuation of all human things!
True. Changes will befall, and friends may part,

But distance only can not change the heart:
And, were I called to prove th' assertion true,
One proof should serve—a reference to you.

Whence comes it then, that in the wane of life,
Though nothing have occurred to kindle strife,
We find the friends we fancied we had won,
Though numerous once, reduced to few or none?
Can gold grow worthless, that has stood the touch?
No; gold they seemed, but they were never such.

Horatio's servant once, with bow and cringe,
Swinging the parlour door upon its hinge,
Dreading a negative, and overawed
Lest he should trespass, begged to go abroad.
Go, fellow?—whither?—turning short about—
Nay. Stay at home—you're always going out.
'Tis but a step, sir, just at the street's end—
For what?—An please you, sir, to see a friend.—
A friend! Horatio cried, and seemed to start—
Yea, marry shalt thou, and with all my heart.—
And fetch my cloak; for, though the night be raw,
I'll see him too—the first I ever saw.

I knew the man, and knew his nature mild,
And was his plaything often when a child;
But somewhat at that moment pinched him close,
Else he was seldom bitter or morose.
Perhaps his confidence just then betrayed,
His grief might prompt him with the speech he made;
Perhaps 'twas mere good humour gave it birth,
The harmless play of pleasantry and mirth.
Howe'er it was, his language, in my mind,
Bespoke as least a man that knew mankind.

But not to moralize too much, and strain
To prove an evil, of which all complain,
(I hate long arguments verbosely spun)
One story more, dear Hill, and I have done.
Once on a time an emperor, a wise man,
No matter where, in China, or Japan,
Decreed, that whosoever should offend
Against the well known duties of a friend,
Convicted once should ever after wear
But half a coat, and show his bosom bare.
The punishment importing this, no doubt,
That all was naught within, and all found out.

O happy Britain! we have not to fear
Such hard and arbitrary measure here;
Else, could a law, like that which I relate,
Once have the sanction of our triple state,
Some few, that I have known in days of old,
Would run most dreadful risk of catching cold;
While you, my friend, whatever wind should blow,
Might traverse England safely to and fro,
An honest man, close buttoned to the chin,
Broad cloth without, and a warm heart within.

Tirocinium:

OR,

A REVIEW OF SCHOOLS.

Κεφαλιον δη παιδειας ορθη τροφη. *Plato.*
Αρχη πολιτειας απασης νεων τροφα. *Diog. Laert.*

TO THE

REV. WM. CAWTHORNE UNWIN,

RECTOR OF STOCK IN ESSEX, THE TUTOR OF HIS TWO SONS, THE FOLLOWING POEM, RECOMMENDING PRIVATE TUITION, IN PREFERENCE TO AN EDUCATION AT SCHOOL, IS INSCRIBED, BY HIS AFFECTIONATE FRIEND,

Olney, Nov. 6th, 1784. WILLIAM COWPER.

It is not from his form, in which we trace
Strength joined with beauty, dignity with grace,
That man, the master of this globe, derives
His right of empire over all that lives.
That form indeed, th' associate of a mind
Vast in its powers, ethereal in its kind,
That form the labour of almighty skill,
Framed for the service of a freeborn will,
Asserts precedence, and bespeaks control,
But borrows all its grandeur from the soul.
Hers is the state, the splendour, and the throne,
An intellectual kingdom, all her own.
For her the Memory fills her ample page
With truths poured down from every distant age
For her amasses an unbounded store,
The wisdom of great nations, now no more;
Though laden, not encumbered with her spoil;
Laborious, yet unconscious of her toil;
When copiously supplied, then most enlarged;
Still to be fed, and not to be surcharged.

For her the Fancy, roving unconfined,
The present muse of every pensive mind,
Works magic wonders; adds a brighter hue
To Nature's scenes than Nature ever knew.
At her command winds rise, and waters roar,
Again she lays them slumbering on the shore;
With flower and fruit the wilderness supplies,
Or bids the rocks in ruder pomp to rise.
For her the Judgment, umpire in the strife,
That Grace and Nature have to wage through life,
Quick-sighted arbiter of good and ill,
Appointed sage preceptor to the Will,
Condemns, approves, and with a faithful voice
Guides the decision of a doubtful choice.
Why did the fiat of a God give birth
To yon fair Sun, and his attendant Earth?
And, when descending, he resigns the skies,
Why takes the gentler Moon her turn to rise,
Whom Ocean feels through all his countless waves,
And owns her power on every shore he laves?
Why do the seasons still enrich the year,
Fruitful and young as in their first career?
Spring hangs her infant blossoms on the trees,
Rocked in the cradle of the western breeze;
Summer in haste the thriving charge receives
Beneath the shade of her expanded leaves,
Till Autumn's fiercer heats and plenteous dews
Dye them at last in all their glowing hues.—
'Twere wild confusion all, and bootless waste,
Power misemployed, munificence misplaced,
Had not its author dignified the plan,
And crowned it with the majesty of man.
Thus formed, thus placed, intelligent, and taught,
Look where he will, the wonders God has wrought,
The wildest scorner of his Maker's laws
Finds in a sober moment time to pause,
To press th' important question on his heart,
"Why formed at all, and wherefore as thou art?"
If man be what he seems, this hour a slave,
The next mere dust and ashes in the grave;
Endued with reason only to descry
His crimes and follies with an aching eye;
With passions, just that he may prove, with pain,
The force he spends against their fury vain;
And if, soon after having burnt, by turns,
With every lust, with which frail Nature burns,
His being end, where death dissolves the bond,
The tomb take all, and all be blank beyond;
Then he, of all that Nature has brought forth,
Stands self-impeached the creature of least worth,
And useless while he lives and when he dies,
Brings into doubt the wisdom of the skies.
Truths, that the learned pursue with eager thought,
Are not important always as dear-bought,
Proving at last, though told in pompous strains,
A childish waste of philosophic pains;
But truths, on which depends our main concern,
That 'tis our shame and misery not to learn,
Shine by the side of every path we tread
With such a lustre, he that runs may read.
'Tis true that, if to trifle life away
Down to the sunset of their latest day,
Then perish on futurity's wide shore
Like fleeting exhalations, found no more,
Were all that Heaven required of human kind,
And all the plan their destiny designed,
What none could reverence all might justly blame,
And man would breathe but for his Maker's shame,
But reason heard, and nature well perused,
At once the dreaming mind is disabused.
If all we find possessing earth, sea, air,
Reflect his attributes, who placed them there,
Fulfil the purpose, and appear designed
Proofs of the wisdom of th' all-seeing mind,
'Tis plain the creature, whom he chose t' invest
With kingship and dominion o'er the rest,
Received his nobler nature, and was made
Fit for the power in which he stands arrayed;
That first, or last, hereafter, if not here,
He too might make his author's wisdom clear,
Praise him on earth, or, obstinately dumb,
Suffer his justice in a world to come.
This once believed, 'twere logic misapplied,
To prove a consequence by none denied,
That we are bound to cast the minds of youth
Betimes into the mould of heavenly truth,
That taught of God they may indeed be wise,
Nor ignorantly wandering miss the skies.
In early days the conscience has in most
A quickness, which in later life is lost:
Preserved from guilt by salutary fears,
Or guilty soon relenting into tears.
Too careless often, as our years proceed,
What friends we sort with, or what books we read,
Our parents yet exert a prudent care,
To feed our infant minds with proper fare;
And wisely store the nursery by degrees
With wholesome learning, yet acquired with ease.
Neatly secured from being soiled or torn
Beneath a pane of thin translucent horn,
A book (to please us at a tender age,
'Tis called a book, though but a single page)
Presents the prayer the Saviour deigned to teach,
Which children use, and parsons—when they preach;
Lisping our syllables, we scramble next
Through moral narrative, or sacred text;
And learn with wonder how this world began,
Who made, who marred, and who has ransomed man:
Points, which, unless the Scripture made them plain,
The wisest heads might agitate in vain.

O thou, whom, borne on Fancy's eager wing
Back to the season of life's happy spring,
I pleased remember, and, while memory yet
Holds fast her office here, can ne'er forget;
Ingenious dreamer, in whose well-told tale
Sweet fiction and sweet truth alike prevail;
Whose humorous vein, strong sense, and simple style,
May teach the gayest, make the gravest smile;
Witty, and well employed, and, like thy Lord,
Speaking in parables his slighted word;
I name thee not, lest so despised a name
Should move a sneer at thy deserved fame;
Yet e'en in transitory life's late day,
That mingles all my brown with sober gray,
Revere the man, whose *pilgrim* marks the road,
And guides the *progress* of the soul to God.
'Twere well with most, if books, that could engage
Their childhood, pleased them at a riper age;
The man, approving what had charmed the boy,
Would die at last in comfort, peace, and joy;
And not with curses on his heart, who stole
The gem of truth from his unguarded soul.
The stamp of artless piety impressed
By kind tuition on his yielding breast,
The youth now bearded, and yet pert and raw,
Regards with scorn, though once received with awe;
And, warped into the labyrinth of lies,
That babblers, called philosophers, devise,
Blasphemes his creed, as founded on a plan
Replete with dreams, unworthy of a man.
Touch but his nature in its ailing part,
Assert the native evil of his heart,
His pride resents the charge, although the proof*
Rise in his forehead, and seem rank enough:
Point to the cure, describe a Saviour's cross
As God's expedient to retrieve his loss,
The young apostate sickens at the view,
And hates it with the malice of a Jew.

How weak the barrier of mere nature proves,
Opposed against the pleasures Nature loves!
While self-betrayed, and wilfully undone,
She longs to yield, no sooner wooed than won.
Try now the merits of this blest exchange
Of modest truth for wit's eccentric range.
Time was, he closed as he began the day
With decent duty, not ashamed to pray;
The practice was a bond upon his heart,
A pledge he gave for a consistent part;
Nor could he dare presumptuously displease
A power, confessed so lately on his knees.
But now farewell all legendary tales,
The shadows fly, philosophy prevails;
Prayer to the winds, and caution to the waves;
Religion makes the free by nature slaves.

* See 2 Chron. ch. xxvi ver. 19.

Priests have invented, and the world admired
What knavish priests promulgate as inspired;
Till reason, now no longer overawed,
Resumes her powers, and spurns the clumsy fraud;
And, common-sense diffusing real day,
The meteor of the Gospel dies away.
Such rhapsodies our shrewd discerning youth
Learn from expert inquirers after truth;
Whose only care, might truth presume to speak
Is not to find what they profess to seek.
And thus, well-tutored only while we share
A mother's lectures and a nurse's care;
And taught at schools much mythologic stuff,*
But sound religion sparingly enough;
Our early notices of truth, disgraced,
Soon lose their credit, and are all effaced.
Would you your son should be a sot or dunce,
Lascivious, headstrong, or all these at once;
That in good time the stripling's finished taste
For loose expense, and fashionable waste,
Should prove your ruin, and his own at last;
Train him in public with a mob of boys,
Childish in mischief only and in noise,
Else of a manish growth, and five in ten
In infidelity and lewdness men.
There shall he learn, ere sixteen winters old,
That authors are most useful pawned or sold;
That pedantry is all that schools impart,
But taverns teach the knowledge of the heart,
There waiter Dick, with Bacchanalian lays,
Shall win his heart, and have his drunken praise,
His counsellor and bosom friend shall prove,
And some street-pacing harlot his first love.
Schools, unless discipline were doubly strong,
Detain their adolescent charge too long;
The management of tyros of eighteen
Is difficult; their punishment obscene.
The stout tall captain, whose superior size
The minor heroes view with envious eyes,
Becomes their pattern, upon whom they fix
Their whole attention, and ape all his tricks.
His pride, that scorns t' obey or to submit,
With them is courage; his effrontery wit.
His wild excursions, window-breaking feats,
Robbery of gardens, quarrels in the streets.
His hairbreadth 'scapes, and all his daring schemes
Transport them, and are made their favourite themes.
In little bosoms such achievements strike
A kindred spark: they burn to do the like.
Thus, half-accomplished ere he yet begin
To show the peeping down upon his chin;

* The author begs leave to explain.—Sensible that, without such knowledge, neither the ancient poet nor historians can be tasted, or indeed understood, he does not mean to censure the pains that are taken to instruct a schoolboy in the religion of the Heathen, but merely that neglect of Christian culture which leaves him shamefully ignorant of his own.

And, as maturity of years comes on,
Made just th' adept that you designed your son;
T' ensure the perseverance of this course,
And give your monstrous project all its force,
Send him to college. If he there be tamed,
Or in one article of vice reclaimed,
Where no regard of ord'nances is shown
Or looked for now, the fault must be his own.
Some sneaking virtue lurks in him, no doubt,
Where neither strumpets' charms, nor drinking bout,
Nor gambling practices, can find it out.
Such youths of spirit, and that spirit too,
Ye nurseries of our boys, we owe to you:
Though from ourselves the mischief more proceeds,
For public schools 'tis public folly feeds.
The slaves of custom and established mode,
With packhorse constancy we keep the road,
Crooked or straight, through quags or thorny dells,
True to the jingling of our leader's bells.
To follow foolish precedents, and wink
With both our eyes, is easier than to think:
And such an age as ours balks no expense,
Except of caution, and of common-sense;
Else sure notorious fact, and proof so plain,
Would turn our steps into a wiser train.
I blame not those, who with what care they can,
O'erwatch the numerous and unruly clan;
Or, if I blame, 'tis only that they dare
Promise a work, of which they must despair.
Have ye, ye sage intendants of the whole,
An ubiquarian presence and control,
Elisha's eye, that, when Gehazi strayed,
Went with him, and saw all the game he played?
Yes—ye are conscious; and on all the shelves
Your pupils strike upon, have struck yourselves.
Or if, by nature sober, ye had then,
Boys as ye were, the gravity of men;
Ye knew at least, by constant proofs addressed
To ears and eyes, the vices of the rest.
But ye connive at what ye can not cure,
And evils, not to be endured, endure,
Lest power exerted, but without success,
Should make the little ye retain still less.
Ye once were justly famed for bringing forth
Undoubted scholarship and genuine worth;
And in the firmament of fame still shines
A glory, bright as that of all the signs,
Of poets raised by you, and statesmen, and divines.
Peace to them all! those brilliant times are fled,
And no such lights are kindling in their stead.
Our striplings shine indeed, but with such rays,
As set the midnight riot in a blaze;
And seem, if judged by their expressive looks,
Deeper in none than in their surgeons' books.
Say, muse, (for education made the song,
No muse can hesitate, or linger long)
What causes move us, knowing as we must,
That these *ménageries* all fail their trust,
To send our sons to scout and scamper there,
While colts and puppies cost us so much care?
Be it a weakness, it deserves some praise,
We love the playplace of our early days;
The scene is touching, and the heart is stone,
That feels not at the sight, and feels at none.
The wall on which we tried our graving skill,
The very name we carved subsisting still;
The bench on which we sat while deep employed,
Tho' mangled, hacked, and hewed, not yet destroyed;
The little ones, unbuttoned, glowing hot,
Playing our games, and on the very spot,
As happy as we once, to kneel and draw
The chalky ring, and knuckle down at taw,
To pitch the ball into the grounded hat,
Or drive it devious with a dexterous pat;
The pleasing spectacle at once excites
Such recollection of our own delights,
That, viewing it, we seem almost t' obtain
Our innocent sweet simple years again.
This fond attachment to the well-known place,
Whence first we started into life's long race,
Maintains its hold with such unfailing sway,
We feel it e'en in age, and at our latest day.
Hark! how the sire of chits, whose future share
Of classic food begins to be his care,
With his own likeness placed on either knee,
Indulges all a father's heart-felt glee;
And tells them, as he strokes their silver locks,
That they must soon learn Latin, and to box;
Then turning he regales his listening wife
With all th' adventures of his early life;
His skill in coachmanship, or driving chaise,
In bilking tavern bills, and spouting plays;
What shifts he used, detected in a scrape,
How he was flogged, or had the luck t' escape,
What sums he lost at play, and how he sold
Watch, seals, and all—till all his pranks are told.
Retracing thus his *frolics*, ('tis a name
That palliates deeds of folly and of shame)
He gives the local bias all its sway;
Resolved that where he played his sons shall play,
And destines their bright genius to be shown
Just in the scene where he displayed his own.
The meek and bashful boy will soon be taught
To be as bold and forward as he ought;
The rude will scuffle through with ease enough,
Great schools suit best the sturdy and the rough.
Ah happy designation, prudent choice,
Th' event is sure; expect it; and rejoice!
Soon see your wish fulfilled in either child,
The pert made perter, and the tame made wild.
The great indeed, by titles, riches, birth,
Excused th' encumbrance of more solid worth.
Are best disposed of where with most success
They may acquire that confident address,
Those habits of profuse and lewd expense,
That scorn of all delights but those of sense.

Which, though in plain plebeians we condemn,
With so much reason all expect from them.
But families of less illustrious fame,
Whose chief distinction is their spotless name,
Whose heirs, their honours none, their income small,
Must shine by true desert, or not at all,
What dream they of, that with so little care
They risk their hopes, their dearest treasure, there?
They dream of little Charles or William graced
With wig prolix, down flowing to his waist;
They see th' attentive crowds his talents draw,
They hear him speak—the oracle of law.
The father, who designs his babe a priest,
Dreams him episcopally such at least;
And, while the playful jockey scours the room
Briskly, astride upon the parlour broom,
In fancy sees him more superbly ride
In coach with purple lined, and mitres on its side.
Events improbable and strange as these,
Which only a parental eye foresees,
A public school shall bring to pass with ease.
But how? resides such virtue in that air,
As must create an appetite for prayer?
And will it breathe into him all the zeal,
That candidates for such a prize should feel,
To take the lead and be the foremost still
In all true worth and literary skill?
" Ah blind to bright futurity, untaught
The knowledge of the world, and dull of thought!
Church ladders are not always mounted best
By learned clerks, and Latinists professed.
Th' exalted prize demands an upward look,
Not to be found by poring on a book.
Small skill in Latin, and still less in Greek,
Is more than adequate to all I seek.
Let erudition grace him, or not grace,
I give the bauble but the second place:
His wealth, fame, honours, all that I intend,
Subsist and centre in one point—a friend.
A friend, whate'er he studies or neglects,
Shall give him consequence, heal all defects.
His intercourse with peers and sons of peers—
There dawns the splendour of his future years:
In that bright quarter his propitious skies
Shall blush betimes, and there his glory rise.
Your Lordship, and *Your Grace!* what school can teach
A rhetoric equal to those parts of speech?
What need of Homer's verse, or Tully's prose,
Sweet interjections! if he learn but those?
Let reverend churls his ignorance rebuke,
Who starve upon a dogs-eared Pentateuch,
The Parson knows enough, who knows a duke."
Egregious purpose! worthily begun
In barbarous prostitution of your son;
Pressed on *his* part by means that would disgrace
A scriv'ner's clerk, or footman out of place,
And ending, if at last its end be gained,
In sacrilege, in God's own house profaned.
It may succeed; and, if his sins should call
For more than common punishment it shall;
The wretch shall rise, and be the thing on earth
Least qualified in honour, learning, worth,
To occupy a sacred, awful post,
In which the best and worthiest tremble most.
The *royal letters* are a thing of course,
A King, that would, might recommend his horse;
And deans, no doubt, and chapters, with one voice,
As bound in duty, would confirm the choice.
Behold your bishop! well he plays his part,
Christian in name, and infidel in heart,
Ghostly in office, earthly in his plan,
A slave at court, elsewhere a lady's man.
Dumb as a senator, and as a priest
A piece of mere church-furniture at best;
To live estranged from God his total scope,
And his end sure, without one glimpse of hope.
But fair although and feasible it seem,
Depend not much upon your golden dream;
For Providence, that seems concerned t' exempt
The hallowed bench from absolute contempt,
In spite of all the wrigglers into place,
Still keeps a seat or two for worth and grace,
And therefore 'tis, that, though the sight be rare,
We sometimes see a Lowth or Bagot there.
Besides, school-friendships are not always found,
Though fair in promise, permanent and sound,
The most disint'rested and virtuous minds,
In early years connected, time unbinds;
New situations give a different cast
Of habit, inclination, temper, taste;
And he, that seemed our counterpart at first,
Soon shows the strong similitude reversed.
Young heads are giddy, and young hearts are warm,
And make mistakes for manhood to reform.
Boys are at best but pretty buds unblown,
Whose scent and hues are rather guessed than known;
Each dreams that each is just what he appears,
But learns his error in maturer years,
When disposition, like a sail unfurled,
Shows all its rents and patches to the world.
If, therefore, e'en when honest in design,
A boyish friendship may so soon decline,
'Twere wiser sure t' inspire a little heart
With just abhorrence of so mean a part,
Than set your son to work at a vile trade
For wages so unlikely to be paid.
Our public hives of puerile resort,
That are of chief and most approved report,
To such base hopes, in many a sordid soul,
Owe their repute in part, but not the whole.
A principle, whose proud pretensions pass
Unquestioned, though the jewel be but glass-

That with a world, not often over-nice,
Ranks as a virtue, and is yet a vice;
Or rather a gross compound, justly tried,
Of envy, hatred, jealousy, and pride—
Contributes most perhaps t' enhance their fame,
And emulation is its specious name.
Boys, once on fire with that contentious zeal,
Feel all the rage, that female rivals feel;
The prize of beauty in a woman's eyes
Not brighter than in theirs the scholar's prize.
The spirit of that competition burns
With all varieties of ills by turns;
Each vainly magnifies his own success,
Resents his fellow's, wishes it were less,
Exults in his miscarriage, if he fail,
Deems his reward too great, if he prevail,
And labours to surpass him day and night,
Less for improvement than to tickle spite.
The spur is powerful, and I grant its force;
It pricks the genius forward in its course,
Allows short time for play, and none for sloth;
And, felt alike by each, advances both;
But judge, where so much evil intervenes,
The end, though plausible, not worth the means.
Weigh, for a moment, classical desert
Against a heart depraved and temper hurt;
Hurt too perhaps for life; for early wrong,
Done to the nobler part, affects it long;
And you are staunch indeed in learning's cause,
If you can crown a discipline, that draws
Such mischiefs after it, with much applause.
Connexion formed for interest, and endeared
By selfish views, thus censured and cashiered;
And emulation, as engendering hate,
Doomed to a no less ignominious fate:
The props of such proud seminaries fall,
The Jachin and the Boaz of them all.
Great schools rejected then, as those that swell
Beyond a size that can be managed well,
Shall royal institutions miss the bays,
And small academies win all the praise?
Force not my drift beyond its just intent,
I praise a school as Pope a government;
So take my judgment in his language dressed,
"Whate'er is best administered is best."
Few boys are born with talents that excel,
But all are capable of living well;
Then ask not, whether limited or large?
But, watch they strictly, or neglect their charge?
If anxious only, that their boys may *learn*,
While *morals* languish, a despised concern,
The great and small deserve one common blame,
Different in size, but in effect the same.
Much zeal in virtue's cause all teachers boast,
Though motives of mere lucre sway the most;
Therefore in towns and cities they abound,
For there the game they seek is easiest found;
Though there in spite of all that care can do,
Traps to catch youth are most abundant too.

If shrewd, and of a well-constructed brain,
Keen in pursuit, and vigorous to retain,
Your son come forth a prodigy of skill;
As wheresoever taught, so formed, he will;
The pedagogue, with self-complacent air,
Claims more than half the praise as his due share.
But if, with all his genius, he betray,
Not more intelligent than loose and gay,
Such vicious habits as disgrace his name,
Threaten his health, his fortune, and his fame;
Though want of due restraint alone have bred
The symptoms, that you see with so much dread;
Unenvied there, he may sustain alone
The whole reproach, the fault was all his own.
O 'tis a sight to be with joy perused,
By all whom sentiment has not abused;
New-fangled sentiment, the boasted grace
Of those who never feel in the right place;
A sight surpassed by none that we can show,
Though Vestris on one leg still shine below;
A father blest with an ingenious son,
Father, and friend, and tutor, all in one.
How!—turn again to tales long since forgot,
Æsop, and Phædrus, and the rest?—Why not?
He will not blush, that has a father's heart,
To take in childish plays a childish part;
But bends his sturdy back to any toy,
That youth takes pleasure in, to please his boy;
Then why resign into a stranger's hand
A task as much within your own command,
That God and nature, and your interest too,
Seem with one voice to delegate to you?
Why hire a lodging in a house unknown
For one whose tenderest thoughts all hover round your own?
This second weaning, needless as it is,
How does it lacerate both your heart and his!
Th' indented stick, that loses day by day
Notch after notch, till all are smoothed away,
Bear witness, long ere his dismission come,
With what intense desire he wants his home.
But though the joys he hopes beneath your roof
Bid fair enough to answer in the proof,
Harmless, and safe, and natural, as they are,
A disappointment waits him even there:
Arrived, he feels an unexpected change,
He blushes, hangs his head, is shy and strange,
No longer takes, at once, with fearless ease,
His favourite stand between his father's knees,
But seeks the corner of some distant seat,
And eyes the door, and watches a retreat,
And, least familiar where he should be most,
Feels all his happiest privileges lost.
Alas, poor boy!—the natural effect
Of love by absence chilled into respect,
Say, what accomplishments, at school acquired,
Brings he, to sweeten fruits so undesired?
Thou well deserv'st an alienated son.
Unless thy conscious heart acknowledge—none;

None that, in thy domestic snug recess,
He had not made his own with more address,
Though some, perhaps, that shock thy feeling mind,
And better never learned, or left behind.
And too, that, thus estranged, thou canst obtain
By no kind arts his confidence again;
That here begins with most that long complaint
Of filial frankness lost, and love grown faint,
Which, oft neglected, in life's waning years
A parent pours into regardless ears.

Like caterpillars, dangling under trees
By slender threads, and swinging in the breeze,
Which filthily bewray and sore disgrace
The boughs in which are bred th' unseemly race;
While every worm industriously weaves
And winds his web about the rivelled leaves;
So numerous are the follies, that annoy
The mind and heart of every sprightly boy;
Imaginations noxious and perverse,
Which admonition can alone disperse.
Th' encroaching nuisance asks a faithful hand,
Patient, affectionate, of high command,
To check the procreation of a breed
Sure to exhaust the plant on which they feed.
'Tis not enough, that Greek or Roman page,
At stated hours, his freakish thoughts engage;
E'en in his pastimes he requires a friend,
To warn, and teach him safely to unbend;
O'er all his pleasures gently to preside,
Watch his emotions, and control their tide:
And levying thus, and with an easy sway,
A tax of profit from his very play,
T' impress a value, not to be erased,
On moments squandered else, and running all to waste.
And seems it nothing in a father's eye,
That unimproved those many moments fly?
And is he well content his son should find
No nourishment to feed his growing mind
But conjugated verbs, and nouns declined?
For such is all the mental food purveyed
By public hackneys in the schooling trade;
Who feed a pupil's intellect with store
Of syntax, truly, but with little more;
Dismiss their cares, when they dismiss their flock,
Machines themselves, and governed by a clock.
Perhaps a father, blest with any brains,
Would deem it no abuse, or waste of pains,
T' improve this diet, at no great expense,
With savoury truth and wholesome common sense;
To lead his son, for prospects of delight,
To some not steep, though philosophic height,
Thence to exhibit to his wondering eyes
Yon circling worlds, their distance, and their size;
The moons of Jove, and Saturn's belted ball,
And the harmonious order of them all;
To show him in an insect or a flower
Such microscopic proof of skill and power,
As, hid from ages past, God now displays,
To combat atheists with in modern days;
To spread the earth before him, and commend,
With designation of the finger's end,
Its various parts to his attentive note,
Thus bringing home to him the most remote;
To teach his heart to glow with generous flame,
Caught from the deeds of men of ancient fame:
And, more than all, with commendation due,
To set some living worthy in his view,
Whose fair example may at once inspire
A wish to copy what he must admire.
Such knowledge gained betimes, and which appears
Though solid, not too weighty for his years,
Sweet in itself, and not forbidding sport,
When health demands it, of athletic sort,
Would make him—what some lovely boys have been,
And more than one perhaps that I have seen—
An evidence and reprehension both
Of the mere shool-boy's lean and tardy growth.

Art thou a man professionally tied,
With all thy faculties elsewhere applied,
Too busy to intend a meaner care,
Than how t' enrich thyself, and next thine heir;
Or art thou (as though rich, perhaps thou art)
But poor in knowledge, having none t' impart:
Behold that figure, neat, though plainly clad;
His sprightly mingled with a shade of sad;
Not of a nimble tongue, though now and then
Heard to articulate like other men;
No jester, and yet lively in discourse,
His phrase well chosen, clear, and full of force;
And his address, if not quite French in ease,
Not English stiff, but frank, and formed to please;
Low in the world, because he scorns its arts;
A man of letters, manners, morals, parts;
Unpatronized, and therefore little known;
Wise for himself and his few friends alone—
In him thy well appointed proxy see,
Armed for a work too difficult for thee;
Prepared by taste, by learning, and true worth,
To form thy son, to strike his genius forth;
Beneath thy roof, beneath thine eye, to prove
The force of discipline, when backed by love;
To double all thy pleasure in thy child,
His mind informed, his morals undefiled.
Safe under such a wing, the boy shall show
No spots contracted among grooms below,
Nor taint his speech with meannesses, designed
By footman Tom for witty and refined.
There, in his commerce with the liv'ried herd,
Lurks the contagion chiefly to be feared;
For since (so fashion dictates) all, who claim
A higher than a mere plebeian fame,

Find it expedient, come what mischief may,
To entertain a thief or two in pay,
(And they that can afford th' expense of more,
Some half a dozen, and some half a score,)
Great cause occurs, to save him from a band
So sure to spoil him, and so near at hand;
A point secured, if once he be supplied
With some such Mentor always at his side.
Are such men rare? perhaps they would abound,
Were occupation easier to be found,
Were education, else so sure to fail,
Conducted on a manageable scale,
And schools, that have outlived all just esteem,
Exchanged for the secure domestic scheme.—
But, having found him, be thou duke or earl,
Show thou hast sense enough to prize the pearl,
And, as thou wouldst th' advancement of thine heir
In all good faculties beneath his care,
Respect, as is but rational and just,
A man deemed worthy of so dear a trust.
Despised by thee, what more can he expect
From youthful folly than the same neglect;
A flat and fatal negative obtains
That instant upon all his future pains;
His lessons tire, his mild rebukes offend,
And all th' instructions of thy son's best friend
Are a stream choked, or trickling to no end.
Doom him not then to solitary meals;
But recollect that he has sense, and feels;
And that, possessor of a soul refined,
An upright heart, and cultivated mind,
His post not mean, his talents not unknown,
He deems it hard to vegetate alone,
And, if admitted at thy board he sit,
Account him no just mark for idle wit;
Offend not him, whom modesty restrains
From repartee, with jokes that he disdains;
Much less transfix his feelings with an oath;
Nor frown, unless he vanish with the cloth.
And, trust me, his utility may reach
To more than he is hired or bound to teach;
Much trash unuttered, and some ills undone,
Through reverence of the censor of thy son.
  But, if thy table be indeed unclean,
Foul with excess, and with discourse obscene,
And thou a wretch, whom, following her old plan,
The world accounts an honourable man,
Because forsooth thy courage has been tried,
And stood the test, perhaps, on the wrong side;
Though thou hadst never grace enough to prove
That any thing but vice could win thy love;—
Or hast thou a polite, card-playing wife,
Chained to the routs that she frequents for life;
Who, just when industry begins to snore,
Flies, winged with joy, to some coach-crowded door,
And thrice in every winter throngs thine own
With half the chariots and sedans in town,
Thyself meanwhile e'en shifting as thou mayst:
Not very sober though, nor very chaste;
Or is thine house, though less superb thy rank,
If not a scene of pleasure, a mere blank,
And thou at best, and in thy soberest mood,
A trifler vain, and empty of all good;
Though mercy for thyself thou canst have none,
Hear nature plead, show mercy to thy son.
Saved from his home, where every day brings forth
Some mischief fatal to his future worth,
Find him a better in a distant spot,
Within some pious pastor's humble cot,
Where vile example (yours I chiefly mean,
The most seducing, and the oftenest seen,)
May never more be stamped upon his breast,
Nor yet perhaps incurably impressed.
Where early rest makes early rising sure,
Disease or comes not, or finds easy cure,
Prevented much by diet neat and plain;
Or, if it enter, soon starved out again:
Where all th' attention of his faithful host,
Discreetly limited to two at most,
May raise such fruits as shall reward his care,
And not at last evaporate in air:
Where, stillness aiding study, and his mind
Serene, and to his duties much inclined,
Not occupied in day-dreams, as at home,
Of pleasures past, or follies yet to come,
His virtuous toil may terminate at last
In settled habit and decided taste.—
But whom do I advise? the fashion-led,
Th' incorrigibly young, the deaf, the dead,
Whom care and cool deliberation suit
Not better much than spectacles a brute;
Who, if their sons some slight tuition share,
Deem it of no great moment whose, or where;
Too proud t' adopt the thoughts of one unknown,
And much too gay t' have any of their own.
But courage, man! methought the muse replied,
Mankind are various, and the world is wide:
The ostrich, silliest of the feathered kind,
And formed of God without a parent's mind,
Commits her eggs incautious to the dust,
Forgetful that the foot may crush the trust;
And, while on public nurseries they rely,
Not knowing, and too oft not caring, why,
Irrational in what they thus prefer,
No few, that would seem wise, resemble her.
But all are not alike. Thy warning voice
May here and there prevent erroneous choice;
And some perhaps, who, busy as they are,
Yet make their progeny their dearest care,
(Whose hearts will ache, once told what ills may reach
Their offspring, left upon so wild a beach,)
Will need no stress of argument t' enforce
Th' expedience of a less adventurous course:
The rest will slight thy counsel, or condemn;
But *they* have human feelings, turn to *them*.
  To you then, tenants of life's middle state,
Securely placed between the small and great,

Whose character, yet undebauched, retains
Two thirds of all the virtue that remains,
Who, wise yourselves, desire your son should learn
Your wisdom and your ways—to you I turn,
Look round you on a world perversely blind;
See what contempt is fallen on human kind;
See wealth abused, and dignities misplaced,
Great titles, offices, and trusts disgraced,
Long lines of ancestry, renowned of old,
Their noble qualities all quenched and cold;
See Bedlam's closeted and hand-cuffed charge
Surpassed in frenzy by the mad at large;
See great commanders making war a trade,
Great lawyers, lawyers without study made;
Churchmen, in whose esteem their best employ
Is odious, and their wages all their joy,
Who, far enough from furnishing their shelves
With Gospel lore, turn infidels themselves;
See womanhood despised, and manhood shamed
With infamy too nauseous to be named,
Fops at all corners, lady-like in mien,
Civeted fellows, smelt ere they are seen,
Else coarse and rude in manners, and their tongue
On fire with curses, and with nonsense hung,
Now flushed with drunkenness, now with whoredom pale,
Their breath a sample of last night's regale;
See volunteers in all the vilest arts,
Men well endowed, of honourable parts,
Designed by Nature wise, but self-made fools;
All these, and more like these, were bred at schools:
And if it chance, as sometimes chance it will,
That though school-bred, the boy be virtuous still,
Such rare exceptions, shining in the dark,
Prove, rather than impeach, the just remark:
As here and there a twinkling star descried,
Serves but to show how black is all beside.
Now look on him, whose very voice in tone
Just echoes thine, whose features are thine own,
And stroke his polished cheek of purest red,
And lay thine hand upon his flaxen head,
And say, My boy, th' unwelcome hour is come,
When thou, transplanted from thy genial home,
Must find a colder soil and bleaker air,
And trust for safety to a stranger's care;
What character, what turn thou wilt assume
From constant converse with I know not whom;
Who there will court thy friendship, with what views,
And, artless as thou art, whom thou wilt choose;
Though much depends on what thy choice shall be,
Is all chance-medley, and unknown to me,
Canst thou, the tear just trembling on thy lids,
And while the dreadful risk foreseen forbids,
Free too, and under no constraining force,
Unless the sway of custom warp thy course,
Lay such a stake upon the losing side,
Merely to gratify so blind a guide?

Thou canst not! Nature, pulling at thine heart
Condemns th' unfatherly, th' imprudent part.
Thou wouldst not, deaf to Nature's tenderest plea,
Turn him adrift upon a rolling sea,
Nor say, *Go thither*, conscious that there lay
A brood of asps, or quicksands in his way;
Then, only governed by the self-same rule
Of natural pity, send him not to school.
No—guard him better. Is he not thine own,
Thyself in miniature, thy flesh, thy bone?
And hop'st thou not ('tis every father's hope)
That, since thy strength must with thy years elope,
And thou wilt need some comfort, to assuage
Health's last farewell, a staff of thine old age,
That then, in recompense of all thy cares,
Thy child shall show respect to thy gray hairs,
Befriend thee, of all other friends bereft,
And give thy life its only cordial left?
Aware then how much danger intervenes,
To compass that good end, forecast the means.
His heart, now passive, yields to thy command,
Secure it thine, its key is in thine hand.
If thou desert thy charge, and throw it wide,
Nor heed what guests there enter and abide,
Complain not if attachments lewd and base
Supplant thee in it, and usurp thy place.
But, if thou guard its sacred chambers sure
From vicious inmates, and delights impure,
Either his gratitude shall hold him fast,
And keep him warm and filial to the last;
Or, if he prove unkind (as who can say
But, being man, and therefore frail, he may?)
One comfort yet shall cheer thine aged heart,
Howe'er he slight thee, thou hast done thy part.

Oh, barbarous! wouldst thou with a Gothic hand,
Pull down the schools—what!—all the schools i' th' land;
Or throw them up to livery-nags and grooms,
Or turn them into shops and auction-rooms?—
A captious question, sir (and yours is one,)
Deserves an answer similar, or none.
Wouldst thou, possessor of a flock, employ
(Apprised that he is such) a careless boy,
And feed him well, and give him handsome pay
Merely to sleep, and let him run astray?
Survey our schools and colleges, and see
A sight not much unlike my simile.
From education, as the leading cause,
The public character its colour draws;
Thence the prevailing manners take their cast,
Extravagant or sober, loose or chaste.
And, though I would not advertise them yet,
Nor write on each—*This building to be let*,
Unless the world were all prepared t' embrace
A plan well worthy to supply their place;
Yet, backward as they are, and long have been,
To cultivate and keep the *morals* clean,
(Forgive the crime) I wish them, I confess,
Or better managed, or encouraged less.

Miscellaneous Poems.

THE YEARLY DISTRESS,

OR

TITHING TIME AT STOCK, IN ESSEX.

Verses addressed to a country clergyman, complaining of the disagreeableness of the day annually appointed for receiving the dues at the parsonage.

COME, ponder well, for 'tis no jest,
To laugh it would be wrong
The troubles of a worthy priest,
The burthen of my song.

The priest he merry is and blithe
Three quarters of a year,
But oh! it cuts him like a scythe,
When tithing time draws near.

He then is full of fright and fears,
As one at point to die,
And long before the day appears
He heaves up many a sigh.

For then the farmers come jog, jog,
Along the miry road,
Each heart as heavy as a log,
To make their payments good.

In sooth, the sorrow of such days
Is not to be expressed,
When he that takes and he that pays
Are both alike distressed.

Now all unwelcome at his gates
The clumsy swains alight,
With rueful faces and bald pates—
He trembles at the sight.

And well he may, for well he knows
Each bumpkin of the clan,
Instead of paying what he owes,
Will cheat him if he can.

So in they come—each makes his leg,
And flings his head before,
And looks as if he came to beg,
And not to quit a score.

"And how does miss and madam do,
The little boy and all?"
"All tight and well. And how do you,
Good Mr. What-d'ye-call?"

The dinner comes, and down they sit:
Were e'er such hungry folks?
There's little talking, and no wit:
It is no time to joke.

One wipes his nose upon his sleeve,
One spits upon the floor,
Yet not to give offence or grieve,
Hold up the cloth before.

The punch goes round, and they are dull
And lumpish still as ever;
Like barrels with their bellies full,
They only weigh the heavier.

At length the busy time begins.
"Come, neighbours, we must wag—"
The money chinks, down drop their chins,
Each lugging out his bag.

One talks of mildew and of frost,
And one of storms of hail,
And one of pigs that he has lost
By maggots at the tail.

Quoth one, "A rarer man than you
In pulpit none shall hear:
But yet, methinks, to tell you true,
You sell it plaguy dear."

O why are farmers made so coarse,
Or clergy made so fine?
A kick, that scarce would move a horse,
May kill a sound divine.

Then let the boobies stay at home;
'Twould cost him, I dare say,
Less trouble taking twice the sum,
Without the clowns that pay.

SONNET

ADDRESSED TO HENRY COWPER, ESQ.

On his emphatical and interesting Delivery of the Defence of Warren Hastings, Esq., in the House of Lords.

COWPER, whose silver voice, tasked sometimes hard,
Legends prolix delivers in the ears
(Attentive when thou read'st) of England's peers,
Let verse at length yield thee thy just reward.

Thou wast not heard with drowsy disregard,
Expending late on all that length of plea
Thy generous powers; but silence honoured thee,
Mute as e'er gazed on orator or bard.

Thou art not voice alone, but hast beside
Both heart and head; and couldst with music sweet
Of Attic phrase and senatorial tone,
Like thy renowned forefathers, far and wide
Thy fame diffuse, praised not for utterance meet
Of *others'* speech, but magic of *thy own.*

LINES

ADDRESSED TO DR. DARWIN,

Author of the "Botanic Garden."

Two Poets* (poets, by report,
Not oft so well agree,)
Sweet Harmonist of Flora's court!
Conspire to honour Thee.

They best can judge a poet's worth,
Who oft themselves have known
The pangs of a poetic birth
By labours of their own.

We therefore, pleased, extol thy song,
Though various yet complete,
Rich in embellishment, as strong
And learned as 'tis sweet.

No envy mingles with our praise,
Though, could our hearts repine
At any poet's happier lays,
They would—they must at thine.

But we in mutual bondage knit
Of friendship's closest tie,
Can gaze on even Darwin's wit
With an unjaundiced eye;

And deem the Bard, whoe'er he be,
And howsoever known,
Who would not twine a wreath for Thee,
Unworthy of his own.

ON

MRS. MONTAGU'S FEATHER-HANGINGS.

The birds put off their every hue,
To dress a room for Montagu.
The Peacock sends his heavenly dyes,
His *rainbows* and his *starry eyes;*
The Pheasant plumes, which round infold
His mantling neck with downy gold;
The Cock his arched tail's azure show;
And, river-blanched, the Swan his snow.
All tribes beside of Indian name,
That glossy shine, or vivid flame,
Where rises, and where sets the day,
Whate'er they boast of rich and gay,
Contribute to the gorgeous plan,
Proud to advance it all they can.
This plumage neither dashing shower,
Nor blasts that shake the dripping bower,
Shall drench again or discompose,
But, screened from every storm that blows,
It boasts a splendour ever new,
Safe with protecting Montagu.
To the same patroness resort,
Secure of favour at her court,
Strong Genius, from whose forge of thought
Forms rise, to quick perfection wrought,
Which, though new-born, with vigour move,
Like Pallas springing armed from Jove—
Imagination scattering round
Wild roses over furrowed ground,
Which Labour of his frown beguile,
And teach Philosophy a smile—
Wit flashing on Religion's side,
Whose fires, to sacred Truth applied,
The gem, though luminous before,
Obtrudes on human notice more,
Like sunbeams on the golden height
Of some tall temple playing bright—
Well-tutored Learning, from his books
Dismissed with grave, not haughty, looks.
Their order on his shelves exact,
Not more harmonious or compact
Than that, to which he keeps confined
The various treasures of his mind
All these to Montagu's repair,
Ambitious of a shelter there.
There Genius, Learning, Fancy, Wit,
Their ruffled plumage calm refit,
(For stormy troubles loudest roar
Around their flight who highest soar)
And in her eye, and by her aid,
Shine safe without a fear to fade.
She thus maintains divided sway
With yon bright regent of the day;
The plume and poet both, we know,
Their lustre to his influence owe;
And she the works of Phœbus aiding,
Both poet saves and plume from fading.

VERSES

Supposed to be written by Alexander Selkirk, during his solitary abode in the island of Juan Fernandez.

I am monarch of all I survey,
My right there is none to dispute;
From the centre all round to the sea,
I am lord of the fowl and the brute.
O solitude! where are the charms
That sages have seen in thy face?
Better dwell in the midst of alarms,
Than reign in this horrible place.

* Alluding to the poem by Mr. Hayley, which accompanied these lines.

I am out of humanity's reach,
Must finish my journey alone,
Never hear the sweet music of speech,
I start at the sound of my own.
The beasts, that roam over the plain,
My form with indifference see;
They are so unacquainted with man,
Their tameness is shocking to me.

Society, friendship, and love,
Divinely bestowed upon man,
O, had I the wings of a dove,
How soon would I taste you again!
My sorrows I then might assuage
In the ways of religion and truth,
Might learn from the wisdom of age,
And be cheered by the sallies of youth.

Religion! what treasure untold
Resides in that heavenly word!
More precious than silver and gold,
Or all that this earth can afford.
But the sound of the church-going bell
These valleys and rocks never heard,
Never sighed at the sound of a knell,
Or smiled when a sabbath appeared.

Ye winds that have made me your sport,
Convey to this desolate shore
Some cordial endearing report
Of a land I shall visit no more.
My friends, do they now and then send
A wish or a thought after me?
O tell me I yet have a friend,
Though a friend I am never to see.

How fleet is a glance of the mind!
Compared with the speed of its flight,
The tempest itself lags behind,
And the swift winged arrows of light.
When I think of my own native land,
In a moment I seem to be there;
But alas! recollection at hand
Soon hurries me back to despair.

But the seafowl is gone to her nest,
The beast has laid down in his lair;
Even here is a season of rest,
And I to my cabin repair.
There's mercy in every place,
And mercy, encouraging thought!
Gives even affliction a grace,
And reconciles man to his lot.

ON THE PROMOTION OF EDWARD THURLOW, ESQ. *To the Lord High Chancellorship of England.*

Round Thurlow's head in early youth,
And in his sportive days,
Fair Science poured the light of truth,
And Genius shed his rays.

See! with united wonder cried
Th' experienced and the sage,
Ambition in a boy supplied
With all the skill of age!

Discernment, eloquence, and grace,
Proclaim him born to sway
The balance in the highest place,
And bear the palm away.

The praise bestowed was just and wise;
He sprang impetuous forth,
Secure of conquest, where the prize
Attends superior worth.

So the best courser on the plain
Ere yet he starts is known,
And does but at the goal obtain,
What all had deemed his own.

ODE TO PEACE.

Come, peace of mind, delightful guest!
Return, and make thy downy nest
Once more in this sad heart:
Nor riches I nor power pursue,
Nor hold forbidden joys in view;
We therefore need not part.

Where wilt thou dwell, if not with me,
From avarice and ambition free,
And pleasure's fatal wiles?
For whom, alas! dost thou prepare
The sweets that I was wont to share,
The banquet of thy smiles?

The great, the gay, shall they partake
The heaven that thou alone canst make,
And wilt thou quit the stream
That murmurs through the dewy mead,
The grove and the sequestered shed,
To be a guest with them?

For thee I panted, thee I prized,
For thee I gladly sacrificed
Whate'er I loved before;
And shall I see thee start away,
And helpless, hopeless, hear thee say—
Farewell! we meet no more?

HUMAN FRAILTY.

Weak and irresolute is man;
The purpose of to-day,
Woven with pains into his plan,
To-morrow rends away.

The bow well bent, and smart the spring,
Vice seems already slain;
But passion rudely snaps the string,
And it revives again.

Some foe to his upright intent
Finds out his weaker part;
Virtue engages his assent,
But pleasure wins his heart.

'Tis here the folly of the wise
Through all his art we view;
And, while his tongue the charge denies,
His conscience owns it true.

Bound on a voyage of awful length,
And dangers little known,
A stranger to superior strength,
Man vainly trusts his own.

But oars alone can ne'er prevail,
To reach the distant coast;
The breath of heaven must swell the sail,
Or all the toil is lost.

THE MODERN PATRIOT.

Rebellion is my theme all day;
I only wish 't would come
(As who knows but perhaps it may?)
A little nearer home.

Yon roaring boys, who rave and fight
On t' other side th' Atlantic,
I always held them in the right,
But most so when most frantic.

When lawless mobs insult the court,
That man shall be my toast,
If breaking windows be the sport,
Who bravely breaks the most.

But oh! for him my fancy culls
The choicest flowers she bears,
Who constitutionally pulls
Your house about your ears.

Such civil broils are my delight,
Though some folks can't endure them,
Who say the mob are mad outright,
And that a rope must cure them.

A rope! I wish we patriot had
Such strings for all who need 'em—
What! hang a man for going mad!
Then farewell British freedom.

ON OBSERVING SOME NAMES OF LITTLE NOTE RECORDED IN THE BIOGRAPHIA BRITANNICA.

Oh, fond attempt to give a deathless lot
To names ignoble, born to be forgot!
In vain, recorded in historic page,
They court the notice of a future age:
Those twinkling tiny lustres of the land
Drop one by one from Fame's neglecting hand;
Lethæan gulfs receive them as they fall,
And dark oblivion soon absorbs them all.
So when a child, as playful children use,
Has burnt to tinder a stale last year's news,
The flame extinct, he views the roving fire—
There goes my lady, and there goes the squire,
There goes the parson, oh illustrious spark!
And there, scarce less illustrious, goes the clerk!

REPORT OF AN ADJUDGED CASE,

NOT TO BE FOUND IN ANY OF THE BOOKS.

Between Nose and Eyes a strange contest arose,
The spectacles set them unhappily wrong;
The point in dispute was, as all the world knows,
To which the said spectacles ought to belong.

So Tongue was the lawyer, and argued the cause
With a great deal of skill, and a wig full of learning;
While chief baron Ear sat to balance the laws,
So famed for his talent in nicely discerning.

In behalf of the Nose it will quickly appear,
And your lordship, he said, will undoubtedly find,
That the Nose has had spectacles always to wear,
Which amounts to possession time out of mind.

Then holding the spectacles up to the court—
Your lordship observes they are made with a straddle
As wide as the ridge of the Nose is; in short,
Designed to sit close to it, just like a saddle.

Again, would your lordship a moment suppose
('Tis a case that has happened, and may be again)
That the visage or countenance had not a nose,
Pray who would, or who could, wear spectacles then?

On the whole it appears, and my argument shows,
With a reasoning the court will never condemn,
That the spectacles plainly were made for the Nose,
And the Nose was as plainly intended for them.

Then shifting his side (as a lawyer knows how,)
He pleaded again in behalf of the Eyes;
But what were his arguments few people know,
For the court did not think they were equally wise.

So his lordship decreed with a grave solemn tone,
Decisive and clear, without one *if* or *but*—
That, whenever the Nose put his spectacles on,
By daylight or candlelight—Eyes should be shut!

ON THE BURNING

OF

LORD MANSFIELD'S LIBRARY,

TOGETHER WITH HIS MSS.,

By the mob, in the month of June, 1780.

So then—the Vandals of our isle,
Sworn foes to sense and law,
Have burnt to dust a nobler pile
Than ever Roman saw!

And Murray sighs o'er Pope and Swift,
And many a treasure more,
The well-judged purchase, and the gift,
That graced his lettered store.

Their pages mangled, burnt and torn,
The loss was *his alone;*
But ages yet to come shall mourn
The burning of *his own.*

ON THE SAME.

When wit and genius meet their doom
In all devouring flame,
They tell us of the fate of Rome,
And bid us fear the same.

O'er Murray's loss the Muses wept,
They felt the rude alarm,
Yet blest the guardian care that kept
His sacred head from harm.

There Memory, like the bee, that's fed
From Flora's balmy store,
The quintessence of all he read
Had treasured up before.

The lawless herd, with fury blind,
Have done him cruel wrong;
The flowers are gone—but still we find
The honey on his tongue.

THE LOVE OF THE WORLD REPROVED;

OR

HYPOCRISY DETECTED.*

Thus says the prophet of the Turk,
Good Mussulman, abstain from pork;
There is a part in every swine
No friend or follower of mine
May taste, what'er his inclination,
On pain of excommunication.
Such Mahomet's mysterious charge,
And thus he left the point at large.
Had he the sinful part expressed,
They might with safety eat the rest;
But for one piece they thought it hard
From the whole hog to be debarred;
And set their wit at work to find
What joint the prophet had in mind.
Much controversy straight arose,
These choose the back, the belly those;
By some 'tis confidently said
He meant not to forbid the head;
While others at that doctrine rail,
And piously prefer the tail.
Thus, conscience freed from every clog,
Mahometans eat up the hog.
You laugh—'tis well.—The tale applied
May make you laugh on t' other side.
Renounce the world—the preacher cries.
We do—a multitude replies.
While one as innocent regards
A snug and friendly game at cards;
And one, whatever you may say,
Can see no evil in a play;
Some love a concert, or a race;
And others shooting, and the chase.
Reviled and loved, renounced and followed,
Thus, bit by bit, the world is swallowed;
Each thinks his neighbour makes too free,
Yet likes a slice as well as he;
With sophistry their sauce they sweeten,
Till quite from tail to snout 'tis eaten.

* It may be proper to inform the reader, that this piece has already appeared in print, having found its way, though with some unnecessary additions by an unknown hand, into the Leeds Journal without the author's privity.

ON THE DEATH

OF

MRS. (NOW LADY) THROCKMORTON'S BULFINCH.

Ye nymphs! if e'er your eyes were red
With tears o'er hapless favourites shed,
O share Maria's grief!
Her favourite, even in his cage,
(What will not hunger's cruel rage?)
Assassined by a thief.

Where Rhenus strays his vines among,
The egg was laid from which he sprung;
And, though by nature mute,
Or only with a whistle blest,
Well-taught he all the sounds expressed
Of flagelet or flute.

The honours of his ebon poll
Were brighter than the sleekest mole;
His bosom of the hue
With which Aurora decks the skies,
When piping winds shall soon arise,
To sweep away the dew.

Above, below, in all the house,
Dire foe alike of bird and mouse,
No cat had leave to dwell;
And bully's cage supported stood
On props of smoothest-shaven wood,
Large built and latticed well.

Well latticed—but the grate, alas!
Not rough with wire of steel or brass,
For bully's plumage sake,
But smooth with wands from Ouse's side,
With which, when neatly peeled and dried,
The swains their baskets make.

Night veiled the pole, all seemed secure:
When led by instinct sharp and sure,
Subsistence to provide,
A beast forth sallied on the scout,
Long-backed, long-tailed, with whiskered snout,
And badger-coloured hide.

He, entering at the study door,
Its ample area 'gan explore;
And something in the wind
Conjectured, sniffing round and round,
Better than all the books he found,
Food chiefly for the mind.

Just then, by adverse fate impressed,
A dream disturbed poor bully's rest;
In sleep he seemed to view
A rat fast clinging to the cage,
And screaming at the sad presage,
Awoke and found it true.

For, aided both by ear and scent,
Right to his mark the monster went—
Ah, muse! forbear to speak
Minute the horrors that ensued;
His teeth were strong, the cage was wood—
He left poor bully's beak.

Oh had he made that too his prey;
That beak whence issued many a lay
Of such mellifluous tone,
Might have repaid him well, I wote,
For silencing so sweet a throat,
Fast stuck within his own.

Maria weeps—the muses mourn—
So, when by Bachanalians torn,
On Thracian Hebrus' side
The tree-enchanter Orpheus fell,
His head alone remained to tell
The cruel death he died.

THE ROSE.

The Rose had been washed, just washed in a shower,
Which Mary to Anna conveyed,
The plentiful moisture encumbered the flower,
And weighed down its beautiful head.

The cup was all filled, and the leaves were all wet,
And it seemed to a fanciful view,
To weep for the buds it had left with regret,
On the flourishing bush where it grew.

I hastily seized it, unfit as it was
For a nosegay, so dripping and drowned
And swinging it rudely, too rudely, alas!
I snapped it, it fell to the ground.

And such, I exclaimed, is the pitiless part
Some act by the delicate mind,
Regardless of wringing and breaking a heart
Already to sorrow resigned.

This elegant rose, had I shaken it less,
Might have bloomed with its owner awhile;
And the tear that is wiped with a little address,
May be followed perhaps by a smile.

THE DOVES.

Reasoning at every step he treads,
Man yet mistakes his way,
While meaner things, whom instinct leads,
Are rarely known to stray.

One silent eve I wandered late,
And heard the voice of love;
The turtle thus addressed her mate,
And soothed the listening dove:

Our mutual bond of faith and truth
No time shall disengage,
Those blessings of our early youth
Shall cheer our latest age:

While innocence without disguise,
And constancy sincere,
Shall fill the circle of those eyes,
And mine can read them there

Those ills that wait on all below,
Shall ne'er be felt by me,
Or gently felt, and only so,
As being shared with thee.

When lightnings flash among the trees,
Or kites are hovering near,
I fear lest thee alone they seize,
And know no other fear.

'Tis then I feel myself a wife,
And press thy wedded side,
Resolved a union formed for life,
Death never shall divide.

But oh! if fickle and unchaste,
(Forgive a transient thought)
Thou couldst become unkind at last,
And scorn thy present lot.

No need of lightnings from on high,
Or kites with cruel beak;
Denied the endearments of thine eye,
This widowed heart would break.

Thus sang the sweet sequestered bird,
Soft as the passing wind;
And I recorded what I heard,
A lesson for mankind.

A FABLE.

A RAVEN, while with glossy breast
Her new-laid eggs she fondly pressed,
And on her wickerwork high mounted,
Her chickens prematurely counted.
(A fault philosophers might blame.
If quite exempted from the same,)
Enjoyed at ease the genial day;
'Twas April, as the bumpkins say,
The legislature called it May.
But suddenly a wind as high
As ever swept a winter sky,
Shook the young leaves about her ears,
And filled her with a thousand fears,
Lest the rude blast should snap the bough,
And spread her golden hopes below.
But just at eve the blowing weather
And all her fears were hushed together;
And now, quoth poor unthinking Ralph,
'Tis over and the brood is safe;
(For ravens, though as birds of omen
They teach both conjurers and old women,
To tell us what is to befall,
Can't prophesy themselves at all.)
The morning came, when neighbour Hodge,
Who long had marked her airy lodge,
And destined all the treasure there
A gift to his expecting fair,
Climbed like a squirrel to his dray,
And bore the worthless prize away.

MORAL.

'Tis Providence alone secures
In every change both mine and yours:
Safety consists not in escape
From dangers of a frightful shape;
An earthquake may be bid to spare
The man, that's strangled by a hair.
Fate steals along with silent tread,
Found oftenest in what least we dread;
Frowns in the storm with angry brow,
But in the sunshine strikes the blow.

A COMPARISON.

THE lapse of time and rivers is the same,
Both speed their journey with a restless stream;
The silent pace, with which they steal away,
No wealth can bribe, no prayers persuade to stay;
Alike irrevocable both when past,
And a wide ocean swallows both at last.
Though each resemble each in every part,
A difference strikes at length the musing heart;
Streams never flow in vain where streams abound,
How laughs the land with various plenty crowned!
But time, that should enrich the nobler mind,
Neglected leaves a dreary waste behind.

ANOTHER.

ADDRESSED TO A YOUNG LADY.

SWEET stream, that winds through yonder glade,
Apt emblem of a virtuous maid—
Silent and chaste she steals along,
Far from the world's gay busy throng;
With gentle yet prevailing force,
Intent upon her destined course;
Graceful and useful all she does,
Blessing and blest where'er she goes;
Pure bosomed as that watery glass,
And heaven reflected in her face.

THE POET'S NEW-YEAR'S GIFT.

TO MRS. (NOW LADY) THROCKMORTON.

MARIA! I have every good
For thee wished many a time,
Both sad and in a cheerful mood,
But never yet in rhyme.

To wish thee fairer is no need,
More prudent or more sprightly,
Or more ingenious, or more freed
From temper-flaws unsightly.

What favour then not yet possessed,
Can I for thee require,
In wedded love already blest,
To thy whole heart's desire?

None here is happy but in part;
Full bliss is bliss divine;
There dwells some wish in every heart,
And doubtless one in thine.

That wish, on some fair future day,
Which Fate shall brightly gild,
('Tis blameless, be it what it may,)
I wish it all fulfilled.

ODE TO APOLLO.

ON AN INK-GLASS ALMOST DRIED IN THE SUN.

Patron of all those luckless brains,
That, to the wrong side leaning,
Indite much metre with much pains,
And little or no meaning:

Ah why, since oceans, rivers, streams,
That water all the nations,
Pay tribute to thy glorious beams,
In constant exhalations;

Why, stooping from the noon of day,
Too covetous of drink,
Apollo, hast thou stolen away
A poet's drop of ink?

Upborne into the viewless air
It floats a vapour now,
Impelled through regions dense and rare,
By all the winds that blow.

Ordained perhaps ere summer flies,
Combined with millions more,
To form an Iris in the skies,
Though black and foul before.

Illustrious drop! and happy then
Beyond the happiest lot,
Of all that ever past my pen,
So soon to be forgot!

Phœbus, if such be thy design,
To place it in thy bow,
Give wit, that what is left may shine
With equal grace below.

PAIRING TIME ANTICIPATED.

A FABLE.

I shall not ask Jean Jacques Rosseau,*
If birds confabulate or no;
'Tis clear, that they were always able
To hold discourse, at least in fable;
And e'en the child, that knows no better
Than to interpret by the letter
A story of a cock and bull,
Must have a most uncommon scull.
It chanced then on a winter's day,
But warm, and bright, and calm as May,
The birds, conceiving a design
To forestall sweet St. Valentine,
In many an orchard, copse, and grove,
Assembled on affairs of love,
And with much twitter and much chatter,
Began to agitate the matter.
At length a Bulfinch, who could boast
More years and wisdom than the most,
Entreated, opening wide his beak,
A moment's liberty to speak;
And, silence publicly enjoined,
Delivered briefly thus his mind:

My friends! be cautious how ye treat
The subject upon which we meet:
I fear we shall have winter yet.

A Finch, whose tongue knew no control,
With golden wing, and satin poll,
A last year's bird, who ne'er had tried
What marriage means, thus pert replied:

Methinks the gentleman, quoth she,
Opposite in the apple-tree,
By his good will would keep us single
Till yonder heaven and earth shall mingle,
Or (which is likelier to befall)
Till death exterminate us all.
I'll marry without more ado,
My dear Dick Redcap, what say you?

Dick heard, and tweedling, ogling, bridling
Turning short round, strutting and sideling,
Attested, glad, his approbation
Of an immediate conjugation.
Their sentiments, so well expressed,
Influenced mightily the rest;
All paired, and each pair built a nest.

But though the birds were thus in haste,
The leaves came on not quite so fast,
And Destiny, that sometimes bears
An aspect stern on man's affairs,
Not altogether smiled on theirs.
The wind, of late breathed gently forth,
Now shifted east, and east by north;
Bare trees and shrubs but ill, you know,
Could shelter them from rain or snow;
Stepping into their nests, they paddled,
Themselves were chilled, their eggs were addled;
Soon every father bird and mother
Grew quarrelsome and pecked each other,
Parted without the least regret,
Except that they had ever met,
And learned in future to be wiser,
Than to neglect a good adviser.

MORAL.

Misses! the tale that I relate
This lesson seems to carry—
Choose not alone a proper mate,
But proper time to marry.

* It was one of the whimsical speculations of this philosopher, that all fables which ascribe reason and speech to animals should be withheld from children, as being only vehicles of deception. But what child was ever deceived by them, or can be, against the evidence of his senses?

THE DOG AND THE WATER-LILY.

NO FABLE.

The noon was shady, and soft airs
Swept Ouse's silent tide,
When, 'scaped from literary cares,
I wandered on his side.

My spaniel, prettiest of his race,
And high in pedigree,
(Two nymphs* adorned with every grace
That spaniel found for me.)

Now wantoned lost in flags and reeds,
Now starting into sight,
Pursued the swallows o'er the meads
With scarce a slower flight.

It was the time when Ouse display'd
His lilies newly blown;
Their beauties I intent surveyed,
And one I wished my own.

With cane extended far I sought
To steer it close to land;
But still the prize, though nearly caught,
Escaped my eager hand.

Beau marked my unsuccessful pains
With fixed considerate face,
And puzzling set his puppy brains
To comprehend the case.

But with a cherup clear and strong,
Dispersing all his dream,
I thence withdrew, and followed long
The windings of the stream.

My ramble ended, I returned;
Beau, trotting far before,
The floating wreath again discerned,
And plunging left the shore.

I saw him with that lily cropped
Impatient swim to meet
My quick approach, and soon he dropped
The treasure at my feet.

Charmed with the sight, the world, I cried,
Shall hear of this thy deed:
My dog shall mortify the pride
Of man's superior breed

But chief myself I will enjoin,
Awake at duty's call,
To show a love as prompt as thine
To Him who gives me all.

* Sir Robert Gunning's daughters.

THE POET, THE OYSTER, AND SENSITIVE PLANT.

An Oyster, cast upon the shore,
Was heard, though never heard before,
Complaining in a speech well worded—
And worthy thus to be recorded:—

Ah, hapless wretch, condemned to dwell
For ever in my native shell;
Ordained to move when others please,
Not for my own content or ease;
But tossed and buffeted about,
Now *in* the water and now *out*.
'Twere better to be born a stone,
Of ruder shape, and feeling none,
Than with a tenderness like mine,
And sensibilities so fine!
I envy that unfeeling shrub,
Fast-rooted against every rub.

The plant he meant, grew not far off,
And felt the sneer with scorn enough;
Was hurt, disgusted, mortified,
And with asperity replied.

When, cry the botanists, and stare,
Did plants called sensitive grow there?
No matter when—a poet's muse is
To make them grow just where she chooses.

You shapeless nothing in a dish,
You that are but almost a fish,
I scorn your coarse insinuation,
And have most plentiful occasion
To wish myself the rock I view,
Or such another dolt as you:
For many a grave and learned clerk,
And many a gay unlettered spark,
With curious touch examines me,
If I can feel as well as he;
And when I bend, retire and shrink,
Says—Well, 'tis more than one would think!
Thus life is spent (oh fie upon 't!)
In being touched, and crying—Don't!

A poet, in his evening walk,
O'erheard and checked this idle talk.
And your fine sense, he said, and yours,
Whatever evil it endures,
Deserves not, if so soon offended,
Much to be pitied or commended.
Disputes, though short, are far too long,
Where both alike are in the wrong;
Your feelings in their full amount,
Are all upon your own account.

You, in your grotto-work enclosed,
Complain of being thus exposed;
Yet nothing feel in that rough coat,
Save when the knife is at your throat,
Wherever driven by wind or tide,
Exempt from every ill beside.

And as for you, my Lady Squeamish,
Who reckon every touch a blemish,
If all the plants, that can be found
Embellishing the scene around,
Should droop and wither where they grow,
You would not feel at all—not you.
The noblest minds their virtue prove
By pity, sympathy, and love:
These, these are feelings truly fine,
And prove their owner half divine.
His censure reached them as he dealt it,
And each by shrinking showed he felt it.

THE SHRUBBERY.

WRITTEN IN A TIME OF AFFLICTION.

Oh, happy shades—to me unblest!
Friendly to peace, but not to me!
How ill the scene that offers rest,
And heart that can not rest, agree!

This glassy stream, that spreading pine,
Those alders quivering to the breeze,
Might soothe a soul less hurt than mine,
And please, if any thing could please.

But fixed unalterable Care
Foregoes not what she feels within,
Shows the same sadness every where,
And slights the season and the scene.

For all that pleased in wood or lawn,
While Peace possessed these silent bowers,
Her animating smile withdrawn,
Has lost its beauties and its powers

The saint or moralist should tread
This moss-grown alley musing, slow;
They seek like me the secret shade.
But not like me to nourish wo!

Me fruitful scenes and prospects waste
Alike admonish not to roam;
These tell me of enjoyments past,
And those of sorrows yet to come.

THE WINTER NOSEGAY.

What Nature, alas! has denied
To the delicate growth of our isle,
Art has in a measure supplied,
And winter is decked with a smile.
See, Mary, what beauties I bring
From the shelter of that sunny shed,
Where the flowers have the charms of the spring,
Though abroad they are frozen and dead.

'Tis a bower of Arcadian sweets,
Where Flora is still in her prime,
A fortress to which she retreats
From the cruel assaults of the clime.
While Earth wears a mantle of snow,
These pinks are as fresh and as gay
As the fairest and sweetest that blow
On the beautiful bosom of May.

See how they have safely survived
The frowns of a sky so severe;
Such Mary's true love, that has lived
Through many a turbulent year.
The charms of the late blowing rose
Seemed graced with a livelier hue,
And the winter of sorrow best shows
The truth of a friend such as you.

MUTUAL FORBEARANCE

NECESSARY TO THE HAPPINESS OF THE MARRIED STATE.

The lady thus addressed her spouse:
What a mere dungeon is this house!
By no means large enough: and was it,
Yet this dull room, and that dark closet,
Those hangings with their worn out graces,
Long beards, long noses, and pale faces,
Are such an antiquated scene,
They overwhelm me with the spleen.
Sir Humphrey, shooting in the dark,
Makes answer quite beside the mark:
No doubt, my dear, I bade him come,
Engaged myself to be at home,
And shall expect him at the door
Precisely when the clock strikes four.
You are so deaf, the lady cried,
(And raised her voice, and frowned beside,)
You are so sadly deaf, my dear,
What shall I do to make you hear?
Dismiss poor Harry! he replies;
Some people are more nice than wise:
For one slight trespass all this stir?
What if he did ride whip and spur,
'Twas but a mile—your favourite horse
Will never look one hair the worse.
Well, I protest 'tis past all bearing—
Child! I am rather hard of hearing—
Yes, truly; one must scream and bawl:
I tell you, you can't hear at all!
Then, with a voice exceeding low,
No matter if you hear or no.
Alas! and is domestic strife,
That sorest ill of human life,
A plague so little to be feared,
As to be wantonly incurred,
To gratify a fretful passion,
On every trivial provocation?

The kindest and the happiest pair
Will find occasion to forbear:
And something, every day they live,
To pity, and perhaps forgive.
But if infirmities, that fall
In common to the lot of all,
A blemish or a sense impaired,
Are crimes so little to be spared,
Then farewell all that must create
The comfort of the wedded state;
Instead of harmony, 'tis jar,
And tumult, and intestine war.
The love that cheers life's latest stage,
Proof against sickness and old age,
Preserved by virtue from declension,
Becomes not weary of attention;
But lives, when that exterior grace,
Which first inspired the flame, decays.
'Tis gentle, delicate, and kind,
To faults compassionate or blind,
And will with sympathy endure
These evils it would gladly cure:
But angry, coarse, and harsh expression,
Shows love to be a mere profession;
Proves that the heart is none of his,
Or soon expels him if it is.

THE NEGRO'S COMPLAINT.

Forced from home and all its pleasures,
Afric's coast I left forlorn;
To increase a stranger's treasures,
O'er the raging billows borne.
Men from England bought and sold me,
Paid my price in paltry gold;
But, though slave they have enrolled me
Minds are never to be sold.

Still in thought as free as ever,
What are England's rights, I ask,
Me from my delights to sever,
Me to torture, me to task?
Fleecy locks and black complexion
Can not forfeit Nature's claim;
Skins may differ, but affection
Dwells in white and black the same.

Why did all creating Nature
Make the plant for which we toil?
Sighs must fan it, tears must water,
Sweat of ours must dress the soil.
Think, ye masters, iron-hearted,
Lolling at your jovial boards;
Think how many backs have smarted
For the sweets your cane affords.

Is there, as ye sometimes tell us,
Is there one who reigns on high?
Has he bid you buy and sell us,
Speaking from his throne the sky?
Ask him, if your knotted scourges,
Matches, blood-extorting screws,
Are the means that duty urges
Agents of his will to use?

Hark! he answers—wild tornadoes,
Strewing yonder sea with wrecks;
Wasting towns, plantations, meadows,
Are the voice with which he speaks
He, foreseeing what vexations
Afric's sons should undergo,
Fixed their tyrant's habitations
Where his whirlwinds answer—no

By our blood in Afric wasted,
Ere our necks received the chain;
By the miseries that we tasted,
Crossing in your barks the main;
By our suffering since ye brought us
To the man-degrading mart;
All, sustained by patience, taught us
Only by a broken heart:

Deem our nation brutes no longer,
Till some reason ye shall find
Worthier of regard, and stronger
Than the colour of our kind.
Slaves of gold, whose sordid dealings
Tarnish all your boasted powers,
Prove that you have human feelings,
Ere you proudly question ours!

PITY FOR POOR AFRICANS

'Video meliora proboque,
Deteriora sequor.'—

I own I am shocked at the purchase of slaves,
And fear those who buy them and sell them are knaves;
What I hear of their hardships, their tortures, and groans,
Is almost enough to draw pity from stones.

I pity them greatly, but I must be mum,
For how could we do without sugar and rum?
Especially sugar, so needful we see?
What, give up our desserts, our coffee, and tea?

Besides, if we do, the French, Dutch, and Danes,
Will heartily thank us, no doubt, for our pains;
If we do not buy the poor creatures, they will,
And tortures and groans will be multiplied still.

If foreigners likewise would give up the trade,
Much more in behalf of your wish might be said;
But, while they get riches by purchasing blacks,
Pray tell me why we may not also go snacks?

Your scruples and arguments bring to my mind
A story so pat, you may think it is coined,

On purpose to answer you, out of my mint;
But I can assure you I saw it in print.

A youngster at school, more sedate than the rest,
Had once his integrity put to the test;
His comrades had plotted an orchard to rob,
And asked him to go and assist in the job.

He was shocked, sir, like you, and answered—'Oh no!
What! rob our good neighbour! I pray you don't go;
Besides, the man's poor, his orchard's his bread,
Then think of his children, for they must be fed.'

'You speak very fine, and you look very grave,
But apples we want, and apples we'll have;
If you will go with us, you shall have a share,
If not, you shall have neither apple nor pear.'

They spoke, and Tom pondered—'I see they will go:
Poor man! what a pity to injure him so!
Poor man! I would save him his fruit if I could,
But staying behind would do him no good.

'If the matter depended alone upon me,
His apples might hang, till they dropped from the tree;
But, since they will take them, I think I'll go too,
He will lose none by me, though I get a few.'

His scruples thus silenced, Tom felt more at ease,
And went with his comrades the apples to seize;
He blamed and protested, but joined in the plan;
He shared in the plunder, but pitied the man.

THE MORNING DREAM.

'Twas in the glad season of spring,
Asleep at the dawn of the day,
I dreamed what I can not but sing,
So pleasant it seemed as I lay.
I dreamed, that, on ocean afloat,
Far hence to the westward I sailed,
While the billows high-lifted the boat,
And the fresh-blowing breeze never failed.

In the steerage a woman I saw,
Such at least was the form that she wore,
Whose beauty impressed me with awe,
Ne'er taught me by woman before.
She sat, and a shield at her side
Shed light, like a sun on the waves
And, smiling divinely, she cried—
'I go to make freemen of slaves.'

Then raising her voice to a strain
The sweetest that ear ever heard,
She sung of the slave's broken chain,
Wherever her glory appeared.
Some clouds which had over us hung,
Fled, chased by her melody clear,
And methought while she liberty sung,
'Twas liberty only to hear.

Thus swiftly dividing the flood,
To a slave-cultured island we came,
Where a demon, her enemy, stood—
Oppression his terrible name.
In his hand, as the sign of his sway,
A scourge hung with lashes he bore,
And stood looking out for his prey
From Africa's sorrowful shore.

But soon as approaching the land
That goddess-like woman he viewed,
The scourge he let fall from his hand,
With the blood of his subjects imbrued.
I saw him both sicken and die,
And the moment the monster expired,
Heard shouts that ascended the sky,
From thousands with rapture inspired.

Awaking how could I but muse
At what such a dream should betide?
But soon my ear caught the glad news,
Which served my weak thought for a guide—
That Britannia, renowned o'er the waves
For the hatred she ever has shown,
To the black-sceptered rulers of slaves,
Resolves to have none of her own.

THE

NIGHTINGALE AND GLOW-WORM.

A NIGHTINGALE, that all day long
Had cheered the village with a song,
Nor yet at eve his note suspended,
Nor yet when eventide was ended,
Began to feel, as well he might,
The keen demands of appetite;
When, looking eagerly around,
He spied far off, upon the ground,
A something shining in the dark,
And knew the glow-worm by his spark;
So, stooping down from hawthorn top,
He thought to put him in his crop.
The worm, aware of his intent,
Harangued him thus, right eloquent:
Did you admire my lamp, quoth he,
As much as I your minstrelsy,
You would abhor to do me wrong,
As much as I to spoil your song;
For 'twas the selfsame power divine
Taught you to sing, and me to shine,
That you with music, I with light,
Might beautify and cheer the night

The songster heard this short oration,
And warbling cut his approbation,
Released him, as my story tells,
And found a supper somewhere else!
Hence jarring sectaries may learn
Their real interest to discern;
That brother should not war with brother,
And worry and devour each other:
But sing and shine by sweet consent,
Till life's poor transient night is spent,
Respecting in each other's case
The gifts of nature and of grace.
Those Christians best deserve the name,
Who studiously make peace their aim;
Peace, both the duty and the prize
Of him that creeps and him that flies.

ON A GOLDFINCH,

STARVED TO DEATH IN HIS CAGE.

Time was when I was free as air,
The thistle's downy seed my fare,
My drink the morning dew;
I perched at will on every spray,
My form genteel, my plumage gay,
My strains for ever new.

But gaudy plumage, sprightly strain,
And form genteel, were all in vain,
And of a transient date;
For caught, and caged, and starved to death,
In dying sighs my little breath
Soon passed the wiry grate.

Thanks, gentle swain, for all my woes,
And thanks for this effectual close
And cure of every ill;
More cruelty could none express;
And I, if you had shown me less,
Had been your prisoner still.

THE PINE-APPLE AND BEE.

The pine-apples, in triple row,
Were basking hot, and all in blow;
A bee of most discerning taste,
Perceived the fragrance as he passed,
On eager wing the spoiler came,
And searched for crannies in the frame,
Urged his attempt on every side,
To every pane his trunk applied;
But still in vain, the frame was tight,
And only pervious to the light;
Thus having wasted half the day,
He trimmed his flight another way.
Methinks, I said, in thee I find
The sin and madness of mankind.
To joys forbidden man aspires,
Consumes his soul with vain desires;
Folly the spring of his pursuit,
And disappointment all the fruit.
While Cynthio ogles, as she passes,
The nymph between two chariot glasses,
She is the pine-apple, and he
The silly unsuccessful bee.
The maid, who views with pensive air
The show-glass fraught with glittering ware,
Sees watches, bracelets, rings, and lockets,
But sighs at thought of empty pockets;
Like thine, her appetite is keen,
But ah, the cruel glass between!
Our dear delights are often such,
Exposed to view, but not to touch;
The sight our foolish heart inflames,
We long for pine-apples in frames;
With hopeless wish one looks and lingers;
One breaks the glass and cuts his fingers:
But they whom truth and wisdom lead,
Can gather honey from a weed.

HORACE. BOOK II. ODE X.

Receive, dear friend, the truths I teach,
So shalt thou live beyond the reach
Of adverse Fortune's power;
Not always tempt the distant deep,
Nor always timorously creep
Along the treacherous shore.

He that holds fast the golden mean,
And lives contentedly between
The little and the great,
Feels not the wants that pinch the poor,
Nor plagues that haunt the rich man's door
Imbittering all his state.

The tallest pines feel most the power
Of winter blasts; the loftiest tower
Comes heaviest to the ground;
The bolts, that spare the mountain's side,
His cloud-capt eminence divide,
And spread the ruin round.

The well-informed philosopher
Rejoices with a wholesome fear,
And hopes, in spite of pain;
If Winter bellow from the north,
Soon the sweet Spring comes dancing forth,
And Nature laughs again.

What if thine heaven be overcast,
The dark appearance will not last;
Expect a brighter sky.
The God that strings the silver bow,
Awakes sometimes the muses too,
And lays his arrows by.

If hindrances obstruct thy way,
Thy magnanimity display,
And let thy strength be seen;
But O! if fortune fill thy sail
With more than a propitious gale,
Take half thy canvass in.

REFLECTION ON THE FOREGOING ODE.

And is this all? Can Reason do no more,
Than bid me shun the deep, and dread the shore?
Sweet moralist! afloat on life's rough sea,
The Christian has an art unknown to thee.
He holds no parley with unmanly fears;
Where duty bids, he confidently steers,
Faces a thousand dangers at her call,
And, trusting in his God, surmounts them all.

THE LILY AND THE ROSE.

The nymph must lose her female friend,
If more admired than she—
But where will fierce contention end,
If flowers can disagree?

Within the garden's peaceful scene
Appeared two lovely foes
Aspiring to the rank of queen
The Lily and the Rose.

The Rose soon reddened into rage,
And, swelling with disdain,
Appealed to many a poet's page
To prove her right to reign.

The Lily's height bespoke command,
A fair imperial flower;
She seemed designed for Flora's hand,
The sceptre of her power.

This civil bickering and debate
The goddess chanced to hear,
And flew to save, ere yet too late,
The pride of the parterre.

Yours is, she said, the nobler hue,
And yours the statelier mien;
And, till a third surpasses you,
Let each be deemed a queen.

Thus, soothed and reconciled, each seeks
The fairest British fair:
The seat of empire is her cheeks,
They reign united there.

IDEM LATINE REDDITUM.

Heu inimicitias quoties parit æmula forma,
Quam raro pulchræ pulchra placere potest
Sed fines ultra solitos discordia tendit,
Cum flores ipsos bilis et ira movent.

Hortus ubi dulces præbet tacitosque recessus,
Se rapit in partes gens animosa duas;
Hic sibi regalis Amaryllis candida cultus,
Illic purpureo vindicat ore Rosa.

Ira Rosam et meritis quæsita superbia tangunt,
Multaque ferventi vix cohibenda sinu,
Dum sibi fautorum ciet undique nomina vatum,
Jusque suum, multo carmine fulta, probat.

Altior emicat illa, et celso vertice nutat,
Ceu flores inter non habitura parem,
Fastiditque alios, et nata videtur in usus
Imperii, sceptrum, Flora quod ipsa gerat.

Nec Dea non sensit civilis murmura rixæ,
Cui curæ est pictas pandere ruris opes,
Deliciasque suas nunquam non prompta tueri,
Dum licet et locus est, ut tueatur, adest.

Et tibi forma datur procerior omnibus, inquit;
Et tibi, principibus qui solet esse, color;
Et donec vincat quædam formosior ambas,
Et tibi reginæ nomen, et esto tibi.

His ubi sedatus furor est, petit utraque nympham,
Qualem inter Veneres Anglia sola parit;
Hanepenes imperium est, nihil optant amplius, hujus
Regnant in nitidis, et sine lite, genis.

THE POPLAR FIELD.

The poplars are felled, farewell to the shade,
And the whispering sound of the cool colonnade;
The winds play no longer and sing in the leaves,
Nor Ouse on his bosom their image receives.

Twelve years have elapsed, since I last took a view
Of my favourite field, and the bank where they grew;
And now in the grass behold they are laid,
And the tree is my seat, that once lent me a shade.

The blackbird has fled to another retreat,
Where the hazels afford him a screen from the heat,
And the scene where his melody charmed me before,
Resounds with his sweet-flowing ditty no more.

My fugitive years are all hasting away,
And I must ere long lie as lowly as they,
With a turf on my breast, and a stone at my head,
Ere another such grove shall arise in its stead.

'Tis a sight to engage me, if any thing can,
To muse on the perishing pleasures of man:
Though his life be a dream, his enjoyments, I see,
Have a being less durable even than he.*

IDEM LATINE REDDITUM.

Populæ cecidet gratissima copia silvæ,
Conticuere susurri, omnisque evanuit umbra.
Nulle jam levibus se miscent frondibus auræ,
Et nulla in fluvio ramorum ludit imago.

Hei mihi! bis senos dum luctu torqueor annos,
His cogor silvis suetoque carrere recessu,
Cum sero rediens, stratasque in gramine cernens,
Insedi arboribus, sub queis errare solebam.

Ah ubi nunc merulæ cantus? Felicior illum
Silva tegit, duræ nondum permissa bipenni;
Scilicet exustos colles camposque patentes
Odit, et indignans et non rediturus abivit.

Sed qui succisas doleo succidar et ipse,
Et prius huic parilis quàm creverit altera silva
Flebor, et, exquiis parvis donatus, habebo
Defixum lapidum tumulique cubantis acervum.

Tam subito perisse videns tam digna manere,
Agnosco humanas sortes et tristia fata—
Sit licit ipse brevis, volucrique simillimus umbræ,
Est homini brevior citiusque obitura voluptas.

VOTUM.

O matutini rores auræque salubres,
O nemora, et lætæ rivis felicibus herbæ,
Graminei colles, et amœnæ in vallibus umbræ!
Fata modò dederint quas olim in rure paterno
Delicias, procul arte, formidine novi.
Quàm vellem ignotus, quod mens mea semper avebat,
Ante larem proprium placidam expectare senectam,
Tum demùm, exactis non infeliciter annis,
Sortiri tacitum lapidem, aut sub cespite condi!

TRANSLATION OF

PRIOR'S CHLOE AND EUPHELIA.

Mercator, vigiles oculos ut fallere possit,
Nomine sub ficto trans mare mittit opes;
Lené sonat liquidumque meis Euphelia chordis,
Sed solam exoptant te, mea vota, Chloe.

Ad speculum ornabat nitidos Euphelia crines,
Cum dixit mea lux, Heus, cane, sume lyram,
Namque lyram juxta positam cum carmine vidit,
Suave quidem carmen dulcisonamque lyram.

Fila lyræ vocemque paro suspiria surgunt,
Et miscent numeris murmura mœsta meis,
Dumque tuæ memora laudes, Euphelia formæ,
Tota anima interia pendet ab ore Chloes.

Subrubet illa pudore, et contrahit altera frontem,
Me torquet mea mens conscia, psallo, tremo;
Atque Cupidinea dixit Dea cincta corona,
Heu! fallendi artem quam didicere parum.

* Mr. Cowper afterwards altered this last stanza in the following manner:

The change both my heart and my fancy employs,
I reflect on the frailty of man and his joys;
Short-lived as we are, yet our pleasures we see,
Have a still shorter date, and die sooner than we.

THE DIVERTING

HISTORY OF JOHN GILPIN.

Showing how he went farther than he intended, and came safe home again.

John Gilpin was a citizen
Of credit and renown,
A train-band captain eke was he
Of famous London town

John Gilpin's spouse said to her dear,
Though wedded we have been
These twice ten tedious years, yet we
No holiday have seen.

To-morrow is our wedding day,
And we will then repair
Unto the Bell at Edmonton
All in a chaise and pair.

My sister, and my sister's child,
Myself, and children three,
Will fill the chaise; so you must ride
On horseback after we.

He soon replied, I do admire
Of womankind but one,
And you are she, my dearest dear,
Therefore it shall be done.

I am a linen-draper bold,
As all the world doth know,
And my good friend the calender
Will lend his horse to go.

Quoth Mrs. Gilpin, That's well said;
And for that wine is dear,
We will be furnished with our own,
Which is both bright and clear.

John Gilpin kissed his loving wife;
O'erjoyed was he to find,
That, though on pleasure she was bent,
She had a frugal mind.

The morning came, the chaise was brought,
But yet was not allowed
To drive up to the door, lest all
Should say that she was proud.

So three doors off the chaise was stayed,
Where they did all get in;
Six precious souls, and all agog
To dash through thick and thin.

Smack went the whip, round went the wheels,
Were ever folks so glad,
The stones did rattle underneath,
As if Cheapside were mad.

John Gilpin at his horse's side
Seized fast the flowing mane,
And up he got in haste to ride,
But soon came down again:

For saddle-tree scarce reached had he,
His journey to begin,
When, turning round his head, he saw
Three customers come in.

So down he came; for loss of time,
Although it grieved him sore;
Yet loss of pence, full well he knew,
Would trouble him much more.

'Twas long before the customers
Were suited to their mind,
When Betty screaming came down stairs,
"The wine is left behind!"

Good lack! quoth he—yet bring it me,
My leathern belt likewise,
In which I bear my trusty sword,
When I do exercise.

Now mistress Gilpin (careful soul!)
Had two stone bottles found,
To hold the liquor that she loved,
And keep it safe and sound.

Each bottle had a curling ear,
Through which the belt he drew,
And hung a bottle on each side,
To make his balance true.

Then over all, that he might be
Equipped from top to toe,
His long red cloak, well brushed and neat
He manfully did throw.

Now see him mounted once again
Upon his nimble steed,
Full slowly pacing o'er the stones,
With caution and good heed.

But finding soon a smoother road
Beneath his well-shod feet,
The snorting beast began to trot,
Which galled him in his seat.

So, fair and softly, John he cried,
But John he cried in vain;
That trot became a gallop soon,
In spite of curb or rein.

So stooping down, as needs he must,
Who can not sit upright,
He grasped the mane with both his hands,
And eke with all his might.

His horse, who never in that sort
Had handled been before,
What thing upon his back had got,
Did wonder more and more.

Away went Gilpin, neck or nought,
Away went hat and wig;
He little dreamt, when he sat out,
Of running such a rig.

The wind did blow, the cloak did fly,
Like streamers long and gay,
Till loop and button failing both,
At last it flew away.

Then might all people well discern
The bottles he had slung;
A bottle swinging at each side,
As hath been said or sung.

The dogs did bark, the children screamed,
Up flew the windows all;
And every soul cried out, Well done!
As loud as he could bawl.

Away went Gilpin—who but he?
His fame soon spread around,
He carries weight! he rides a race!
'Tis for a thousand pound!

And still, as fast as he drew near,
'Twas wonderful to view,
How in a trice the turnpike men
Their gates wide open threw.

And now, as he went bowing down
His reeking head full low,
The bottles twain behind his back
Were shattered at a blow.

Down ran the wine into the road,
Most piteous to be seen,
Which made his horse's flanks to smoke
As they had basted been.

But still he seemed to carry weight,
With leathern girdle braced;
For all might see the bottles' necks
Still dangling at his waist.

Thus all through merry Islington
These gambols he did play,
Until he came into the Wash
Of Edmonton so gay;

And there he threw the wash about
On both sides of the way,
Just like unto a trundling mop,
Or a wild goose at play.

At Edmonton his loving wife
From the balcony spied
Her tender husband, wondering much
To see how he did ride.

Stop, stop, John Gilpin!—Here's the house—
They all aloud did cry;
The dinner waits and we are tired;
Said Gilpin—So am I!

But yet his horse was not a whit
Inclined to tarry there;
For why?—his owner had a house
Full ten miles off, at Ware.

So like an arrow swift he flew,
Shot by an archer strong;
So did he fly—which brings me to
The middle of my song.

Away went Gilpin out of breath,
And sore against his will,
Till at his friend the calender's
His horse at last stood still.

The calender, amazed to see
His neighbour in such trim,
Laid down his pipe, flew to the gate,
And thus accosted him:

What news? what news? your tidings tell;
Tell me you must and shall—
Say why bareheaded you are come,
Or why you come at all?

Now Gilpin had a pleasant wit,
And loved a timely joke;
And thus unto the calender
In merry guise he spoke:

I came because your horse would come;
And, if I well forebode,
My hat and wig will soon be here,
They are upon the road.

The calender right glad to find
His friend in merry pin,
Returned him not a single word,
But to the house went in;

Whence straight he came with hat and wig;
A wig that flowed behind,
A hat not much the worse for wear,
Each comely in its kind.

He held them up, and in his turn
That showed his ready wit,
My head is twice as big as yours,
They therefore needs must fit.

But let me scrape the dirt away,
That hangs upon your face;
And stop and eat, for well you may
Be in a hungry case.

Said John, it is my wedding-day,
And all the world would stare,
If wife should dine at Edmonton,
And I should dine at Ware.

So turning to his horse he said,
I am in haste to dine;
'Twas for your pleasure you came here,
You shall go back for mine.

Ah luckless speech, and bootless boast!
For which he paid full dear;
For, while he spoke, a braying ass
Did sing most loud and clear;

Whereat his horse did snort, as he
Had heard a lion roar,
And galloped off with all his might,
As he had done before.

Away went Gilpin, and away
Went Gilpin's hat and wig:
He lost them sooner than at first,
For why?—they were too big.

Now mistress Gilpin, when she saw
Her husband posting down
Into the country far away,
She pulled out half a crown;

And thus unto the youth she said,
That drove them to the Bell,
This shall be yours, when you bring back
My husband safe and well.

The youth did ride and soon did meet
John coming back amain;
Whom in a trice he tried to stop,
By catching at his rein;

But not performing what he meant,
And gladly would have done,
The frighted steed he frighted more,
And made him faster run.

Away went Gilpin, and away
Went postboy at his heels,
The postboy's horse right glad to miss
The lumbering of the wheels.

Six gentlemen upon the road,
Thus seeing Gilpin fly,
With postboy scampering in the rear,
They raised the hue and cry,—

Stop thief! stop thief!—a highwayman!
Not one of them was mute;
And all and each that passed that way
Did join in the pursuit.

And now the turnpike gates again
Flew open in short space;
The toll-men thinking as before,
That Gilpin rode a race.

And so he did, and won it too,
For he got first to town;
Nor stopped till where he had got up
He did again get down.

Now let us sing, long live the king,
And Gilpin, long live he;
And, when he next doth ride abroad,
May I be there to see!

AN EPISTLE

TO AN

AFFLICTED PROTESTANT LADY IN FRANCE.

Madam,

A STRANGER's purpose in these lays
Is to congratulate and not to praise.
To give the creature the Creator's due
Were sin in me, and an offence to you.
From man to man, or e'en to woman paid,
Praise is the medium of a knavish trade,
A coin by craft for folly's use designed,
Spurious, and only current with the blind.
The path of sorrow and that path alone,
Leads to the land where sorrow is unknown;
No traveller ever reached that blest abode,
Who found not thorns and briers in his road,
The world may dance along the flowery plain,
Cheered as they go by many a sprightly strain,
Where Nature has her mossy velvet spread,
With unshod feet they yet securely tread,
Admonished, scorn the caution and the friend,
Bent all on pleasure, heedless of its end.
But he, who knew what human hearts would prove,
How slow to learn the dictates of his love,
That, hard by nature and of stubborn will,
A life of ease would make them harder still,
In pity to the souls his grace designed
To rescue from the ruins of mankind,
Called for a cloud to darken all their years,
And said, "Go, spend them in the vale of tears."
O balmy gales of soul-reviving air!
O salutary streams that murmur there!
These flowing from the fount of grace above,
Those breathed from lips of everlasting love.
The flinty soil indeed their feet annoys;
Chill blasts of trouble nip their springing joys;
An envious world will interpose its frown,
To mar delights superior to its own;
And many a pang, experienced still within,
Reminds them of their hated inmate, Sin:
But ills of every shape and every name,
Transformed to blessings, miss their cruel aim;
And every moment's calm that soothes the breast,
Is given in earnest of eternal rest.
Ah, be not sad, although thy lot be cast
Far from the flock, and in a boundless waste!
No shepherd's tents within thy view appear,
But the chief Shepherd even there is near;
Thy tender sorrows and thy plaintive strain
Flow in a foreign land, but not in vain;
Thy tears all issue from a source divine,
And every drop bespeaks a Saviour thine—
So once in Gideon's fleece the dews were found,
And drought on all the drooping herbs around.

TO THE

REV. W. CAWTHORNE UNWIN.

UNWIN, I should but ill repay
The kindness of a friend,
Whose worth deserves as warm a lay,
As ever friendship penned,
Thy name omitted in a page,
That would reclaim a vicious age.

A union formed, as mine with thee,
Not rashly, nor in sport,
May be as fervent in degree,
And faithful in its sort,
And may as rich in comfort prove
As that of true fraternal love.

The bud inserted in the rind,
The bud of peach or rose,
Adorns, though differing in its kind,
The stock whereon it grows,
With flower as sweet, or fruit as fair
As if produced by nature there.

Not rich, I render what I may,
I seize thy name in haste,
And place it in this first essay,
Lest this should prove the last.
'Tis where it should be—in a plan,
That holds in view the good of man.

The poet's lyre, to fix his fame,
Should be the poet's heart;
Affection lights a brighter flame
Than ever blazed by art.
No muses on these lines attend,
I sink the poet in the friend.

TO THE REVEREND MR. NEWTON.

An Invitation into the Country.

The swallows in their torpid state
Compose their useless wing,
And bees in hives as idly wait
The call of early Spring.

The keenest frost that binds the stream,
The wildest wind that blows,
Are neither felt nor feared by them,
Secure of their repose.

But man, all feeling and awake,
The gloomy scene surveys;
With present ills his heart must ache,
And pant for brighter days.

Old Winter, halting o'er the mead,
Bids me and Mary mourn:
But lovely Spring peeps o'er his head,
And whispers your return.

Then April, with her sister May,
Shall chase him from the bowers,
And weave fresh garlands every day,
To crown the smiling hours.

And if a tear, that speaks regret
Of happier times, appear,
A glimpse of joy, that we have met,
Shall shine and dry the tear.

CATHARINA.

TO MISS STAPLETON, (NOW MRS. COURTNAY.)

She came—she is gone—we have met—
And meet perhaps never again;
The sun of that moment is set,
And seems to have risen in vain.
Catharina has fled like a dream—
(So vanishes pleasure, alas!)
But has left a regret and esteem,
That will not so suddenly pass.

The last evening ramble we made,
Catharina, Maria, and I,
Our progress was often delayed
By the nightingale warbling nigh.
We paused under many a tree,
And much she was charmed with a tone
Less sweet to Maria and me,
Who so lately had witnessed her own.

My numbers that day she had sung,
And gave them a grace so divine,
As only her musical tongue
Could infuse into numbers of mine.
The longer I heard, I esteemed
The work of my fancy the more,
And e'en to myself never seemed
So tuneful a poet before.

Though the pleasures of London exceed
In number the days of the year,
Catharina, did nothing impede,
Would feel herself happier here;
For the close-woven arches of limes
On the banks of our river, I know,
Are sweeter to her many times
Than aught that the city can show.

So it is, when the mind is endued
With a well-judging taste from above;
Then, whether embellished or rude,
'Tis nature alone that we love.
The achievements of art may amuse,
May even our wonder excite,
But groves, hills, and valleys, diffuse
A lasting, a sacred delight.

Since then in the rural recess
Catharina alone can rejoice,
May it still be her lot to possess
The scene of her sensible choice!
To inhabit a mansion remote
From the clatter of street-pacing steeds,
And by Philomel's annual note
To measure the life that she leads.

With her book, and her voice, and her lyre,
To wing all her moments at home;
And with scenes that new rapture inspire,
As oft as it suits her to roam;
She will have just the life she prefers,
With little to hope or to fear,
And ours would be pleasant as hers,
Might we view her enjoying it here.

THE MORALIZER CORRECTED.

A TALE.

A hermit, (or if 'chance you hold
That title now too trite and old)
A man, once young, who lived retired,
As hermit could have well desired,
His hours of study closed at last,
And finished his concise repast,
Stoppled his cruise, replaced his book
Within its customary nook,
And, staff in hand, set forth to share
The sober cordial of sweet air,
Like Isaac, with a mind applied
To serious thought at evening tide.
Autumnal rains had made it chill,
And from the trees, that fringed his hill,

Shades slanting at the close of day
Chilled more his else delightful way.
Distant a little mile he spied
A western bank's still sunny side,
And right toward the favoured place
Proceeding with his nimblest pace,
In hope to bask a little yet,
Just reached it when the sun was set.

Your hermit, young and jovial sirs!
Learns something from whate'er occurs—
And hence, he said, my mind computes
The real worth of man's pursuits.
His object chosen, wealth or fame,
Or other sublunary game,
Imagination to his view
Presents it decked with every hue
That can seduce him not to spare
His powers of best exertion there,
But youth, health, vigour to expend
On so desirable an end.
Ere long approach life's evening shades,
The glow that fancy gave it fades;
And, earned, too late, it wants the grace
That first engaged him in the chase.

True, answered an angelic guide,
Attendant at the senior's side—
But whether all the time it cost,
To urge the fruitless chase be lost,
Must be decided by the worth
Of that, which called his ardour forth.
Trifles pursued, whate'er th' event,
Must cause him shame or discontent;
A vicious object still is worse,
Successful there he wins a curse;
But he, who e'en in life's last stage
Endeavours laudable engage,
Is paid at least in peace of mind,
And sense of having well designed;
And if, ere he attain his end,
His sun precipitate descend,
A brighter prize than that he meant
Shall recompense his mere intent.
No virtuous wish can bear a date
Either too early or too late.

THE FAITHFUL BIRD.

The greenhouse is my summer seat;
My shrubs displaced from that retreat
Enjoyed the open air;
Two goldfinches, whose sprightly song
Had been their mutual solace long,
Lived happy prisoners there.

They sang, as blithe as finches sing,
That flutter loose on golden wing,
And frolic where they list;
Strangers to liberty, 'tis true,
But that delight they never knew,
And therefore never missed.

But nature works in every breast,
With force not easily suppressed;
And Dick felt some desires,
That after many an effort vain,
Instructed him at length to gain
A pass between his wires.

The open windows seemed t' invite
The freeman to a farewell flight;
But Tom was still confined;
And Dick, although his way was clear,
Was much too generous and sincere,
To leave his friend behind.

So settling on his cage, by play,
And chirp, and kiss, he seemed to say,
You must not live alone—
Nor would he quit that chosen stand
Till I, with slow and cautious hand,
Returned him to his own.

O ye, who never taste the joys
Of Friendship, satisfied with noise,
Fandango, ball, and rout!
Blush, when I tell you how a bird,
A prison with a friend preferred
To liberty without.

THE NEEDLESS ALARM.

A TALE.

There is a field through which I often pass,
Thick overspread with moss and silky grass,
Adjoining close to Kilwick's echoing wood,
Where oft the bitch-fox hides her hapless brood,
Reserved to solace many a neighbouring squire,
That he may follow them through brake and brier,
Contusion hazarding of neck or spine,
Which rural gentlemen call sport divine.
A narrow brook, by rushy banks concealed,
Runs in a bottom, and divides the field;
Oaks intersperse it, that had once a head,
But now wear crests of oven-wood instead;
And where the land slopes to its watery bourn,
Wide yawns a gulf beside a ragged thorn;
Bricks line the sides, but shivered long ago
And horrid brambles intertwine below;
A hollow scooped, I judge, in ancient time,
For baking earth, or burning rock to lime.
Not yet the hawthorn bore her berries red,
With which the fieldfare, wintry guest, is fed;
Nor autumn yet had brushed from every spray
With her chill hand, the mellow leaves away;
But corn was housed, and beans were in the stack.
Now therefore issued forth the spotted pack,

With tails high mounted, ears hung low, and throats,
With a whole gamut filled of heavenly notes,
For which, alas! my destiny severe,
Though ears she gave me two, gave me no ear.

The sun, accomplishing his early march,
His lamp now planted on Heaven's topmast arch,
When, exercise and air my only aim,
And heedless whither, to that field I came,
Ere yet with ruthless joy the happy hound
Told hill and dale that Reynard's track was found,
Or with the high-raised horn's melodious clang
All Killwick* and all Dinglederry* rang.

Sheep grazed the field: some with soft bosom pressed
The herb as soft, while nibbling strayed the rest;
Nor noise was heard but of the hasty brook,
Struggling, detained in many a petty nook.
All seemed so peaceful, that, from them conveyed,
To me their peace by kind contagion spread.
But when the huntsman with distended cheek,
'Gan make his instrument of music speak,
And from within the wood that crash was heard,
Though not a hound from whom it burst appeared,
The sheep recumbent, and the sheep that grazed;
All huddling into phalanx, stood and gazed,
Admiring, terrified, the novel strain,
Then coursed the field around, and coursed it round again;
But, recollecting, with a sudden thought,
That flight in circles urged advanced them nought,
They gathered close round the old pit's brink,
And thought again—but knew not what to think.

The man to solitude accustomed long,
Perceives in every thing that lives a tongue;
Not animals alone, but shrubs and trees
Have speech for him, and understood with ease;
After long drought, when rains abundant fall,
He hears the herbs and flowers rejoicing all;
Knows what the freshness of their hue implies,
How glad they catch the largess of the skies;
But, with precision nicer still, the mind
He scans of every locomotive kind;
Birds of all feather, beasts of every name,
That serve mankind, or shun them, wild or tame;
The looks and gestures of their griefs and fears
Have all articulation in his ears;
He spells them true by intuition's light,
And needs no glossary to set him right.

This truth premised was needful as a text,
To win due credence to what follows next.

Awhile they mused; surveying every face,
Thou hadst supposed them of superior race;
Their periwigs of wool, and fears combined,
Stamped on each countenance such marks of mind,
That sage they seemed, as lawyers o'er a doubt,
Which, puzzling long, at last they puzzle out;
Or academic tutors, teaching youths,
Sure ne'er to want them, mathematic truths;
When thus a mutton, statelier than the rest,
A ram, the ewes and wethers sad addressed—
Friends! we have lived too long. I never heard
Sounds such as these, so worthy to be feared.
Could I believe, that winds for ages pent
In earth's dark womb have found at last a vent
And from their prison-house below arise,
With all these hideous howlings to the skies,
I could be much composed, nor should appear,
For such a cause, to feel the slightest fear.
Yourselves have seen, what time the thunders rolled,
All night, me resting quiet in the fold.
Or heard we that tremendous bray alone,
I could expound the melancholy tone;
Should deem it by our old companion made,
The ass; for he, we know, has lately strayed,
And being lost, perhaps, and wandering wide
Might be supposed to clamour for a guide.
But ah! those dreaded yells what soul can hear
That owns a carcase, and not quake for fear?
Demons produce them doubtless; brazen-clawed
And fanged with brass the demons are abroad;
I hold it therefore wisest and most fit,
That, life to save, we leap into the pit.
Him answered then his loving mate and true
But more discreet than he, a Cambrian ewe
How! leap into the pit our life to save?
To save our life leap all into the grave?
For can we find it less? Contemplate first
The depth, how awful! falling there, we burst;
Or should the brambles, interposed, our fall
In part abate, that happiness were small;
For with a race like theirs no chance I see
Of peace or ease to creatures clad as we.
Mean-time, noise kills not. Be it Dapple's bray,
Or be it not, or be it whose it may,
And rush those other sounds, that seem by tongues
Of demons uttered, from whatever lungs,
Sounds are but sounds; and, till the cause appear,
We have at least commodious standing here.
Come fiend, come fury, giant, monster, blast
From earth or hell, we can but plunge at last.
While thus she spake, I fainter heard the peals,
For Reynard, close attended at his heels
By panting dog, tired man, and spattered horse,
Through mere good fortune took a different course.
The flock grew calm again; and I, the road
Following, that led me to my own abode,
Much wondered that the silly sheep had found
Such cause of terror in an empty sound,
So sweet to huntsman, gentleman, and hound.

MORAL.

Beware of desperate steps. The darkest day,
Live till to-morrow, will have passed away.

* Two woods belonging to John Throckmorton, Esq.

BOADICEA.

AN ODE.

When the British warrior queen,
Bleeding from the Roman rods,
Sought, with an indignant mien,
Counsel of her country's gods;

Sage beneath the spreading oak
Sat the Druid, hoary chief;
Every burning word he spoke
Full of rage, and full of grief.

Princess! if our aged eyes
Weep upon thy matchless wrongs,
'Tis because resentment ties
All the terrors of our tongues.

Rome shall perish—write that word
In the blood that she has spilt;
Perish, hopeless and abhorred,
Deep in ruin as in guilt.

Rome, for empire far renowned,
Tramples on a thousand states,
Soon her pride shall kiss the ground—
Hark! the Gaul is at her gates!

Other Romans shall arise,
Heedless of a soldier's name;
Sounds, not arms, shall win the prize,
Harmony the path to fame.

Then the progeny that springs
From the forests of our land,
Armed with thunder, clad with wings,
Shall a wider world command.

Regions Cæsar never knew
Thy posterity shall sway;
Where his eagles never flew,
None invincible as they.

Such the bard's prophetic words,
Pregnant with celestial fire,
Bending as he swept the chords
Of his sweet but awful lyre.

She with all a monarch's pride,
Felt them in her bosom glow:
Rushed to battle, fought and died;
Dying hurled them at the foe.

Ruffians, pitiless as proud,
Heaven awards the vengeance due;
Empire is on us bestowed,
Shame and ruin wait for you.

HEROISM.

There was a time when Ætna's silent fire
Slept unperceived, the mountain yet entire;
When, conscious of no danger from below,
She towered a cloud-capt pyramid of snow.
No thunders shook with deep intestine sound
The blooming groves, that girdled her around.
Her unctuous olives, and her purple vines
(Unfelt the fury of those bursting mines)
The peasant's hopes, and not in vain, assured,
In peace upon her sloping sides matured.
When on a day, like that of the last doom,
A conflagration labouring in her womb,
She teemed and heaved with an infernal birth,
That shook the circling seas and solid earth.
Dark and voluminous the vapours rise,
And hang their horrors in the neighbouring skies,
While through the Stygian veil, that blots the day,
In dazzling streaks the vivid lightnings play.
But oh! what muse, and in what powers of song,
Can trace the torrent as it burns along;
Havoc and devastation in the van,
It marches o'er the prostrate works of man;
Vines, olives, herbage, forests disappear,
And all the charms of a Sicilian year.

Revolving seasons, fruitless as they pass,
See it an uninformed and idle mass;
Without a soil t' invite the tiller's care,
Or blade, that might redeem it from despair.
Yet time at length (what will not time achieve?)
Clothes it with earth, and bids the produce live.
Once more the spiry myrtle crowns the glade,
And ruminating flocks enjoy the shade.
O bliss precarious, and unsafe retreats,
O charming Paradise of short-lived sweets!
The selfsame gale, that wafts the fragrance round,
Brings to the distant ear a sullen sound:
Again the mountain feels th' imprisoned foe,
Again pours ruin on the vale below.
Ten thousand swains the wasted scene deplore,
That only future ages can restore.

Ye monarchs, whom the lure of honour draws,
Who write in blood the merits of your cause,
Who strike the blow, then plead your own defence,
Glory your aim, but justice your pretence;
Behold in Ætna's emblematic fires,
The mischiefs your ambitious pride inspires!
Fast by the stream, that bounds your just domain,
And tells you where you have a right to reign,
A nation dwells, not envious of your throne,
Studious of peace, their neighbours', and their own.
Ill-fated race! how deeply must they rue
Their only crime, vicinity to you!
The trumpet sounds, your legions swarm abroad,
Through the ripe harvest lies their destined road
At every step beneath their feet they tread
The life of multitudes, a nation's bread!
Earth seems a garden in its loveliest dress
Before them, and behind a wilderness.
Famine, and Pestilence, her first-born son,
Attend to finish what the sword begun:

And echoing praises, such as fiends might earn,
And Folly pays, resounds at your return.
A calm succeeds—but Plenty, with her train
Of heart-felt joys, succeeds not soon again,
And years of pining indigence must show
What scourges are the gods that rule below.
Yet man, laborious man, by slow degrees,
(Such is his thirst of opulence and ease)
Plies all the sinews of industrious toil,
Gleans up the refuse of the general spoil,
Rebuilds the towers, that smoked upon the plain,
And the sun gilds the shining spires again.
Increasing commerce and reviving art
Renew the quarrel on the conqueror's part;
And the sad lesson must be learned once more,
That wealth within is ruin at the door.
What are ye, monarchs, lauréled heroes, say,
But Ætnas of the suffering world ye sway?
Sweet Nature, stripped of her embroidered robe,
Deplores the wasted regions of her globe;
And stands a witness at Truth's awful bar,
To prove you there destroyers as ye are.
O place me in some Heaven-protected isle,
Where Peace, and Equity, and Freedom smile;
Where no volcano pours his fiery flood,
No crested warrior dips his plume in blood;
Where Power secures what industry has won;
Where to succeed is not to be undone;
A land, that distant tyrants hate in vain,
In Britain's isle, beneath a George's reign!

ON THE RECEIPT OF MY MOTHER'S PICTURE OUT OF NORFOLK.

The Gift of my Cousin Anne Bodham.

O THAT those lips had language! Life has passed
With me but roughly since I heard thee last.
Those lips are thine—thy own sweet smile I see,
The same, that oft in childhood solaced me;
Voice only fails, else how distinct they say,
"Grieve not, my child, chase all thy fears away!"
The meek intelligence of those dear eyes
(Blest be the art that can immortalize,
The art that baffles Time's tyrannic claim
To quench it) here shine on me still the same.
Faithful remembrancer of one so dear,
O welcome guest, though unexpected here!
Who bidd'st me honour with an artless song,
Affectionate, a mother lost so long
I will obey, not willingly alone,
But gladly, as the precept were her own;
And, while that face renews my filial grief,
Fancy shall weave a charm for my relief,
Shall steep me in Elysian reverie,
A momentary dream, that thou art she.
My Mother! when I learned that thou wast dead,
Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed?
Hovered thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,
Wretched e'en then, life's journey just begun?
Perhaps thou gavest me, though unfelt, a kiss;
Perhaps a tear, if souls can weep in bliss—
Ah, that maternal smile! it answers—Yes.
I heard the bell tolled on thy burial day,
I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away,
And, turning from my nursery window, drew
A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu!
But was it such?—It was.—Where thou art gone,
Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown.
May I but meet thee on that peaceful shore,
The parting word shall pass my lips no more!
Thy maidens, grieved themselves at my concern,
Oft gave me promise of thy quick return.
What ardently I wished, I long believed,
And disappointed still, was still deceived.
By expectation every day beguiled,
Dupe of to-morrow even from a child.
Thus many a sad to-morrow came and went,
Till, all my stock of infant sorrow spent,
I learned at last submission to my lot,
But, though I less deplored thee, ne'er forgot.
Where once we dwelt our name is heard no more,
Children not thine have trod my nursery floor;
And where the gardener Robin, day by day,
Drew me to school along the public way,
Delighted with my bauble coach, and wrapped
In scarlet mantle warm, and velvet cap,
'Tis now become a history little known,
That once we called the pastoral house our own.
Short-lived possession! but the record fair
That memory keeps of all thy kindness there,
Still outlives many a storm, that has effaced
A thousand other themes less deeply traced.
Thy nightly visits to my chamber made,
That thou might'st know me safe and warmly laid;
Thy morning bounties ere I left my home,
The biscuit, or confectionary plum;
The fragrant waters on my cheeks bestowed
By thy own hand, till fresh they shone and glowed;
All this, and more endearing still than all,
Thy constant flow of love, that knew no fall,
Ne'er roughened by those cataracts and breaks
That humour interposed too often makes,
All this still legible in memory's page,
And still to be so to my latest age,
Adds joy to duty, makes me glad to pay
Such honours to thee as my numbers may;
Perhaps a frail memorial, but sincere,
Not scorned in Heaven though little noticed here.
Could Time, his flight reversed, restore the hours,
When, playing with thy vesture's tissued flowers,
The violet, the pink, and jessamine,
I pricked them into paper with a pin,
(And thou wast happier than myself the while,
Wouldst softly speak, and stroke my head and smile)

Could these few pleasant days again appear,
Might one wish bring them, would I wish them here?
I would not trust my heart—the dear delight
Seems so to be desired, perhaps I might—
But no—what here we call our life is such,
So little to be loved, and thou so much,
That I should ill requite thee to constrain
Thy unbound spirit into bonds again.
Thou, as a gallant bark from Albion's coast
(The storms all weathered and the ocean crossed)
Shoots into port at some well-havened isle,
Where spices breathe, and brighter seasons smile,
There sits quiescent on the floods, that show
Her beauteous form reflected clear below,
While airs impregnated with incense play
Around her, fanning light her streamers gay;
So thou, with sails how swift! hast reached the shore,
"Where tempests never beat nor billows roar,"*
And thy loved consort on the dangerous tide
Of life long since has anchored by thy side.
But me, scarce hoping to attain that rest,
Always from port withheld, always distressed—
Me howling blasts drive devious, tempest tossed,
Sails ripped, seams opening wide, and compass lost,
And day by day some current's thwarting force
Sets me more distant from a prosperous course.
Yet O the thought, that thou art safe, and he
That thought is joy, arrive what may to me.
My boast is not, that I deduce my birth
From loins enthroned, and rulers of the earth;
But higher far my proud pretensions rise—
The son of parents past into the skies.
And now, farewell—Time unrevoked has run
His wonted course, yet what I wished is done.
By Contemplation's help, not sought in vain,
I seem t' have lived my childhood o'er again;
To have renewed the joys that once were mine,
Without the sin of violating thine;
And, while the wings of fancy still are free,
And I can view this mimic show of thee,
Time has but half succeeded in his theft—
Thyself removed, thy power to sooth me left.

FRIENDSHIP.

What virtue, or what mental grace,
But men unqualified and base
Will boast it their possession?
Profusion apes their noble part
Of liberality of heart,
And dullness of discretion,

If every polished gem we find,
Illuminating heart or mind:
Provoke to imitation:

No wonder friendship does the same,
That jewel of the purest flame,
Or rather constellation.

No knave but boldly will pretend,
The requisites that form a friend,
A real and a sound one;
Nor any fool, he would deceive
But prove as ready to believe,
And dream that he had found one.

Candid, and generous, and just,
Boys care but little whom they trust,
An error soon corrected—
For who but learns in riper years,
That man, when smoothest he appears,
Is most to be suspected?

But here again, a danger lies,
Lest, having misapplied our eyes,
And taken trash for treasure,
We should unwarily conclude
Friendship a false ideal good,
A mere Utopian pleasure.

An acquisition rather rare
Is yet no subject of despair;
Nor is it wise complaining,
If either on forbidden ground,
Or where it was not to be found,
We sought without attaining.

No friendship will abide the test,
That stands on sordid interest,
Or mean self-love erected;
Nor such as may awhile subsist,
Between the sot and sensualist,
For vicious ends connected.

Who seeks a friend should come disposed
T' exhibit in full bloom disclosed
The graces and the beauties
That from the character he seeks;
For 'tis a union, that bespeaks
Reciprocated duties.

Mutual attention is implied,
And equal truth on either side,
And constantly supported;
'Tis senseless arrogance t' accuse
Another of sinister views,
Our own as much distorted.

But will sincerity suffice?
It is indeed above all price,
And must be made the basis;
But every virtue of the soul
Must constitute the charming whole,
All shining in their places.

* Garth.

A fretful temper will divide
The closest knot that may be tied,
By ceaseless sharp corrosion;
A temper passionate and fierce
May suddenly your joys disperse
At one immense explosion.

In vain the talkative unite
In hopes of permanent delight—
The secret just committed,
Forgetting its important weight,
They drop through mere desire to prate,
And by themselves outwitted.

How bright soe'er the prospect seems,
All thoughts of friendship are but dreams,
If envy chance to creep in;
An envious man, if you succeed,
May prove a dangerous foe indeed,
But not a friend worth keeping.

As envy pines at good possessed,
So jealousy looks forth distressed
On good that seems approaching;
And, if success his steps attend,
Discerns a rival in a friend,
And hates him for encroaching.

Hence authors of illustrious name,
Unless belied by common fame,
Are sadly prone to quarrel,
To deem the wit a friend displays
A tax upon their own just praise,
And pluck each other's laurel.

A man renowned for repartee
Will seldom scruple to make free
With friendship's finest feeling,
Will thrust a dagger at your breast,
And say he wounded you in jest,
By way of balm for healing.

Whoever keeps an open ear
For tattlers, will be sure to hear
The trumpet of contention;
Aspersion is the babbler's trade,
To listen is to lend him aid,
And rush into dissension.

A friendship, that in frequent fits
Of controversial rage emits
The sparks of disputation,
Like hand in hand insurance plates,
Most unavoidably creates
The thought of conflagration.

Some fickle creatures boast a soul
True as a needle to the pole,
Their humour yet so various—
They manifest their whole life through
The needle's deviations too,
Their love is so precarious.

The great and small but rarely meet
On terms of amity complete;
Plebeians must surrender
And yield so much to noble folk,
It is combining fire with smoke,
Obscurity with splendour.

Some are so placid and serene
(As Irish bogs are always green)
They sleep secure from waking,
And are indeed a bog, that bears
Your unparticipated cares
Unmoved and without quaking.

Courtier and patriot can not mix
Their heterogeneous politics
Without an effervescence,
Like that of salts with lemon juice,
Which does not yet like that produce
A friendly coalescence.

Religion should extinguish strife,
And make a calm of human life;
But friends that chance to differ
On points, which God has left at large,
How freely will they meet and charge!
No combatants are stiffer.

To prove at last my main intent
Needs no expense of argument,
No cutting and contriving—
Seeking a real friend we seem
To adopt the chemist's golden dream,
With still less hope of thriving.

Sometimes the fault is all our own,
Some blemish in due time made known
By trespass or omission;
Sometimes occasion brings to light
Our friend's defect long hid from sight,
And even from suspicion.

Then judge yourself and prove your man
As circumspectly as you can,
And, having made election,
Beware no negligence of yours,
Such as a friend but ill endures,
Enfeeble his affection.

That secrets are a sacred trust,
That friends should be sincere and just,
That constancy befits them,
Are observations on the case,
That savour much of common-place,
And all the world admits them.

But 'tis not timber, lead, and stone,
An architect requires alone,
To finish a fine building—
The palace were but half complete,
If he could possibly forget
The carving and the gilding.

The man that hails you Tom or Jack,
And proves by thumps upon your back
How he esteems your merit,
Is such a friend, that one had need
Be very much his friend indeed,
To pardon or to bear it.

A similarity of mind,
Or something not to be defined,
First fixes our attention;
So manners decent and polite,
The same we practised at first sight,
Must save it from declension.

Some act upon this prudent plan,
"Say little and hear all you can:"
Safe policy, but hateful—
So barren sands imbibe the shower,
But render neither fruit nor flower,
Unpleasant and ungrateful.

The man I trust, if shy to me,
Shall find me as reserved as he;
No subterfuge or pleading
Shall win my confidence again;
I will by no means entertain
A spy on my proceeding.

These samples—for alas! at last
These are but samples, and a taste
Of evils yet unmentioned—
May prove the task a task indeed,
In which 'tis much if he succeed
However well-intentioned.

Pursue the search, and you will find
Good sense and knowledge of mankind
To be at least expedient,
And, after summing all the rest,
Religion ruling in the breast
A principal ingredient.

The noblest friendship ever shown
The Saviour's history makes known,
Though some have turned and turned it;
And whether being crazed or blind,
Or seeking with a biassed mind,
Have not, it seems, discerned it.

O Friendship, if my soul forego
Thy dear delights while here below;
To mortify and grieve me,
May I myself at last appear
Unworthy, base, and insincere,
Or may my friend deceive me!

ON A MISCHIEVOUS BULL,

WHICH THE OWNER OF HIM SOLD AT THE AUTHOR'S INSTANCE.

Go—Thou art all unfit to share
The pleasures of this place
With such as its old tenants are,
Creatures of gentler race.

The squirrel here his hoard provides,
Aware of wintry storms,
And woodpeckers explore the sides
Of rugged oaks for worms.

The sheep here smoothes the knotted thorn
With frictions of her fleece;
And here I wander eve and morn,
Like her, a friend to peace.

Ah!—I could pity the exiled
From this secure retreat—
I would not lose it to be styled
The happiest of the great.

But thou canst taste no calm delight;
Thy pleasure is to show
Thy magnanimity in fight,
Thy prowess—therefore go—

I care not whether east or north,
So I no more may find thee;
The angry muse thus sings thee forth,
And claps the gate behind thee.

ANNUS MEMORABILIS, 1789.

Written in Commemoration of his Majesty's happy Recovery

I RANSACKED, for a theme of song,
Much ancient chronicle and long;
I read of bright embattled fields,
Of trophied helmets, spears, and shields,
Of chiefs whose single arm could boast
Prowess to dissipate a host;
Through tomes of fable and of dream
I sought an eligible theme,
But none I found, or found them shared
Already by some happier bard.
To modern times, with Truth to guide
My busy search, I next applied;
Here cities won and fleets dispersed,
Urged loud a claim to be rehearsed,
Deeds of unperishing renown,
Our fathers' triumphs and our own.
Thus, as the bee, from bank to bower,
Assiduous sips at every flower,
But rests on none, till that be found,
Where most nectareous sweets abound.
So I from theme to theme displayed
In many a page historic strayed,
Siege after siege, fight after fight,
Contemplating with small delight.
(For feats of sanguinary hue
Not always glitter in my view;)
Till settling on the current year,
I found the far-sought treasure near.

A theme for poetry divine,
A theme t' ennoble even mine,
In memorable eighty-nine.
The spring of eighty-nine shall be
An era cherished long by me,
Which joyful I will oft record,
And thankful at my frugal board;
For then the clouds of eighty-eight,
That threatened England's trembling state
With loss of what she least could spare,
Her sovereign's tutelary care,
One breath of Heaven, that cried—Restore!
Chased, never to assemble more:
And for the richest crown on earth,
If valued by its wearer's worth,
The symbol of a righteous reign
Sat fast on George's brows again.

Then peace and joy again possessed
Our Queen's long-agitated breast;
Such joy and peace as can be known
By sufferers like herself alone,
Who losing, or supposing lost,
The good on earth they valued most,
For that dear sorrow's sake forego
All hope of happiness below,
Then suddenly regain the prize,
And flash thanksgivings to the skies!

O Queen of Albion, queen of isles!
Since all thy tears were changed to smiles,
The eyes, that never saw thee, shine
With joy not unallied to thine,
Transports not chargeable with art
Illume the land's remotest part,
And strangers to the air of courts,
Both in their toils and at their sports,
The happiness of answered prayers,
That gilds thy features, show in theirs.

If they who on thy state attend,
Awe-struck before thy presence bend,
'Tis but the natural effect
Of grandeur that ensures respect;
But she is something more than Queen,
Who is beloved where never seen.

HYMN,

FOR THE USE OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT OLNEY.

Hear, Lord, the song of praise and prayer,
In Heaven thy dwelling place,
From infants made the public care,
And taught to seek thy face.

Thanks for thy word, and for thy day,
And grant us, we implore,
Never to waste in sinful play
Thy holy sabbaths more.

Thanks that we hear,—but O impart
To each desires sincere,
That we may listen with our heart,
And learn as well as hear.

For if vain thoughts the minds engage
Of older far than we,
What hope, that, at our heedless age,
Our minds should e'er be free?

Much hope, if thou our spirits take
Under thy gracious sway,
Who canst the wisest wiser make,
And babes as wise as they.

Wisdom and bliss thy word bestows,
A sun that ne'er declines,
And be thy mercies showered on *those*
Who placed us where it shines.

STANZAS

Subjoined to the Yearly Bill of Mortality of the Parish of All Saints, Northampton,* Anno Domini, 1787.

Pallida Mors æquo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas Regumque turres. Hor

Pale Death with equal foot strikes wide the door
Of royal halls, and hovels of the poor.

While thirteen moons saw smoothly run
The Nen's barge-laden wave,
All these, life's rambling journey done,
Have found their home, the grave.

Was man (frail always) made more frail
Than in foregoing years?
Did famine or did plague prevail,
That so much death appears?

No; these were vigorous as their sires,
Nor plague nor famine came;
This annual tribute Death requires,
And never waives his claim.

Like crowded forest-trees we stand,
And some are marked to fall;
The axe will smite at God's command,
And soon shall smite us all.

Green as the bay-tree, ever green,
With its new foliage on,
The gay, the thoughtless, have I seen,
I passed—and they were gone.

Read, ye that run, the awful truth,
With which I charge my page;
A worm is in the bud of youth,
And at the root of age.

* Composed for John Cox, parish clerk of Northampton

No present health can health ensure
For yet an hour to come;
No medicine, though it oft can cure,
Can always balk the tomb.

And O! that humble as my lot,
And scorned as in my strain,
These truths, though known, too much forgot,
I may not teach in vain.

So prays your clerk with all his heart,
And ere he quits the pen,
Begs *you* for once to take *his* part,
And answer all—Amen!

ON A SIMILAR OCCASION.

FOR THE YEAR 1788.

Quod adest, memento
Componere æquus. Cætera fluminis
Ritu feruntur. Hor.

Improve the present hour, for all beside
Is a mere feather on a torrent's tide.

Could I, from heaven inspired, as sure presage
To whom the rising year shall prove his last,
As I can number in my punctual page,
And item down the victims of the past;

How each would trembling wait the mournful sheet,
On which the press might stamp him next to die;
And, reading here his sentence, how replete
With anxious meaning, heavenward turn his eye!

Time then would seem more precious than the joys
In which he sports away the treasure now;
And prayer more seasonable than the noise
Of drunkards, or the music-drawing bow.

Then doubtless many a trifler on the brink
Of this world's hazardous and headlong shore,
Forced to a pause, would feel it good to think,
Told that his setting sun must rise no more.

Ah self-deceived! Could I prophetic say
Who next is fated, and who next to fall,
The rest might then seem privileged to play;
But, naming *none*, the Voice now speaks to all.

Observe the dappled foresters, how light
They bound and airy o'er the sunny glade—
One falls—the rest, wide-scattered with affright,
Vanish at once into the darkest shade.

Had we their wisdom, should we, often warned,
Still need repeated warnings, and at last,
A thousand awful admonitions scorned,
Die self-accused of life run all to waste?

Sad waste! for which no after-thrift atones,
The grave admits no cure for guilt or sin;
Dew-drops may deck the turf, that hides the bones
But tears of godly grief, ne'er flow within.

Learn then, ye living! by the mouths be taught
Of all these sepulchres, instructers true,
That, soon or late, death also is your lot.
And the next opening grave may yawn for you.

ON A SIMILAR OCCASION.

FOR THE YEAR 1789.

—Placidaque ibi demum morte quievit.—Virg.
There calm at length he breathed his soul away.

"O most delightful hour by man
Experienced here below,
The hour that terminates his span,
His folly, and his wo!

"Worlds should not bribe me back to tread
Again life's dreary waste,
To see again my days o'erspread
With all the gloomy past.

"My home henceforth is in the skies,
Earth, seas, and sun adieu!
All heaven unfolded to mine eyes,
I have no sight for you."

So spake Aspasio, firm possessed
Of faith's supporting rod,
Then breathed his soul into its rest,
The bosom of his God.

He was a man among the few
Sincere on virtue's side;
And all his strength from Scripture drew
To hourly use applied.

That rule he prized, by that he feared,
He hated, hoped, and loved;
Nor ever frowned, or sad appeared,
Bur when his heart had roved.

For he was frail as thou or I,
And evil felt within:
But, when he felt it, heaved a sigh,
And loathed the thought of sin.

Such lived Aspasio; and at last
Called up from earth to heaven,
The gulf of death triumphant passed,
By gales of blessing driven.

His joys be *mine*, each reader cries,
When my last hour arrives:
They shall be yours, my verse replies,
Such only be your lives.

ON A SIMILAR OCCASION.

FOR THE YEAR 1790.

Ne commonentem recta sperne.—Buchanan.
Despise not my good counsel.

He who sits from day to day,
Where the prisoned lark is hung,
Heedless of his loudest lay,
Hardly knows that he has sung.

Where the watchman in his round
Nightly lifts his voice on high,
None, accustomed to the sound,
Wakes the sooner for his cry.

So your verse-man I, and clerk,
Yearly in my song proclaim
Death at hand—yourselves his mark—
And the foe's unerring aim.

Duly at my time I come,
Publishing to all aloud—
Soon the grave must be your home,
And your only suit, a shroud.

But the monitory strain,
Oft repeated in your ears,
Seems to sound too much in vain,
Wins no notice, wakes no fears.

Can a truth, by all confessed
Of such magnitude and weight
Grow, by being oft impressed,
Trivial as a parrot's prate?

Pleasure's call attention wins,
Hear it often as we may;
New as ever seem our sins,
Though committed every day.

Death and Judgment, Heaven and Hell—
These alone, so often heard,
No more move us than the bell,
When some stranger is interred.

O then, ere the turf or tomb
Cover us from every eye,
Spirit of instruction come,
Make us learn, that we must die.

ON A SIMILAR OCCASION.

FOR THE YEAR 1792.

Felix, qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas,
Atque metus omnes et inexorabile fatum
Subjecit pedibus, strepitumque Acheronta avari!
Virg.

Happy the mortal, who has traced effects
To their first cause, cast fear beneath his feet,
And Death and roaring Hell's voracious fires!

Thankless for favours from on high,
Man thinks he fades too soon;
Though 'tis his privilege to die,
Would he improve the boon.

But he, not wise enough to scan
His blest concerns aright,
Would gladly stretch life's little span
To ages, if he might.

To ages in a world of pain,
To ages, where he goes
Galled by affliction's heavy chain,
And hopeless of repose.

Strange fondness of the human heart,
Enamoured of its harm!
Strange world, that costs it so much smart,
And still has power to charm.

Whence has the world her magic power?
Why deem we death a foe?
Recoil from weary life's best hour,
And covet longer wo?

The cause is Conscience—Conscience oft
Her tale of guilt renews:
Her voice is terrible though soft,
And dread of death ensues.

Then anxious to be longer spared,
Man mourns his fleeting breath:
All evils then seem light, compared
With the approach of Death.

'Tis judgment shakes him; there's the fear,
That prompts the wish to stay;
He has incurred a long arrear,
And must despair to pay.

Pay!—follow Christ, and all is paid:
His death your peace ensures;
Think on the grave where *he* was laid,
And calm descend to *yours*.

ON A SIMILAR OCCASION.

FOR THE YEAR 1793.

De sacris autem hæc sit una sententia, ut conserventur.
Cic. de Leg.

But let us all concur in this one sentiment, that things sacred be inviolate.

He lives, who lives to God alone,
And all are dead beside;
For other source than God is none
Whence life can be supplied.

To live to God is to requite
His love as best we may;
To make his precepts our delight,
His promises our stay.

But life, within a narrow ring
Of giddy joys comprised,

Is falsely named, and no such thing,
But rather death disguised.

Can life in them deserve the name,
Who only live to prove
For what poor toys they can disclaim
An endless life above?

Who, much diseased, yet nothing feel,
Much menaced, nothing dread;
Have wounds, which only God can heal,
Yet never ask his aid?

Who deem his house a useless place,
Faith, want of common sense;
And ardour in the Christian race,
A hypocrite's pretence?

Who trample order; and the day,
Which God asserts his own,
Dishonour with unhallowed play,
And worship chance alone?

If scorn of God's commands, impressed
On word and deed, imply
The better part of man unblessed
With life that can not die:

Such want it, and that want, uncured
Till man resigns his breath,
Speaks him a criminal, assured
Of everlasting death.

Sad period to a pleasant course!
Yet so will God repay
Sabbaths profaned without remorse,
And mercy cast away.

INSCRIPTION

FOR THE TOMB OF MR. HAMILTON.

Pause here, and think; a monitory rhyme
Demands one moment of thy fleeting time.
Consult life's silent clock, thy bounding vein;
Seems it to say—"Health here has long to reign?"
Hast thou the vigour of thy youth? an eye
That beams delight? a heart untaught to sigh?
Yet fear. Youth ofttimes healthful and at ease,
Anticipates a day it never sees;
And many a tomb, like *Hamilton's*, aloud
Exclaims, "Prepare thee for an early shroud."

EPITAPH ON A HARE.

Here lies, whom hound did ne'er pursue,
Nor swifter greyhound follow,
Whose feet ne'er tainted morning dew,
Nor ear heard huntsman's hallo'.

Old Tiney, surliest of his kind,
Who nursed with tender care,
And to domestic bounds confined
Was still a wild Jack-hare

Though duly from my hand he took
His pittance every night,
He did it with a jealous look,
And, when he could, would bite

His diet was of wheaten bread,
And milk and oats, and straw;
Thistles, or lettuces instead,
With sand to scour his maw.

On twigs of hawthorn he regaled,
Or pippin's russet peel,
And, when his juicy salads failed,
Sliced carrot pleased him well.

A Turkey carpet was his lawn,
Whereon he loved to bound,
To skip and gambol like a fawn,
And swing his rump around.

His frisking was at evening hours,
For then he lost his fear,
But most before approaching showers,
Or when a storm drew near.

Eight years and five round rolling moons
He thus saw steal away,
Dozing out all his idle noons,
And every night at play.

I kept him for his humour's sake,
For he would oft beguile
My heart of thoughts that made it ache,
And force me to a smile.

But now beneath his walnut shade
He finds his long last home,
And waits, in snug concealment laid,
Till gentler Puss shall come.

He, still more aged, feels the shocks,
From which no care can save,
And, partner once of Tiney's box,
Must soon partake his grave.

EPITAPHIUM ALTERUM.

Hic etiam jacet,
Qui totum novennium vixit,
Puss.
Siste paulisper,
Qui præteriturus es,
Et tecum sic reputa—
Hunc neque canis venaticus,
Nec plumbum missile,
Nec laqueus,

Nec imbres nimii,
Confecêre:
Tamen mortuus est—
Et moriar ego.

STANZAS

ON THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF SIR CHARLES GRANDISON, IN 1753.

To rescue from the tyrant's sword
Th' oppressed;—unseen and unimplored,
To cheer the face of wo;
From lawless insult to defend
An orphan's right—a fallen friend,
And a forgiven foe;

These, these distinguish from the crowd,
And these alone, the great and good,
The guardians of mankind;
Whose bosoms with these virtues heave
O, with what matchless speed, they leave
The multitude behind!

Then ask ye, from what cause on earth
Virtues like these derive their birth,
Derived from heaven alone,
Full on that favoured breast they shine,
Where faith and resignation join
To call the blessing down.

Such is that heart:—but while the Muse
Thy theme, O RICHARDSON, pursues,
Her feeble spirits faint:
She can not reach, and would not wrong,
That subject for an angel's song,
The hero, and the saint!

ADDRESS TO MISS ——,

ON READING THE PRAYER FOR INDIFFERENCE.

AND dwells there in a female heart,
By bounteous heaven designed
The choicest raptures to impart,
To feel the most refined—

Dwells there a wish in such a breast
Its nature to forego,
To smother in ignoble rest
At once both bliss and wo?

Far be the thought, and far the strain,
Which breathes the low desire,
How sweet soe'er the verse complain,
Though Phœbus string the lyre.

Come then, fair maid, (in nature wise)
Who, knowing them, can tell
From generous sympathy what joys
The glowing bosom swell.

In justice to the various powers
Of pleasing, which you share,
Join me, amid your silent hours,
To form the better prayer.

With lenient balm, may *Ob'ron* hence
To fairy-land be driven;
With every herb that blunts the sense
Mankind received from heaven.

"Oh! if my Sovereign Author please,
Far be it from my fate,
To live, unblest in torpid ease
And slumber on in state.

"Each tender tie of life defied
Whence social pleasures spring,
Unmoved with all the world beside,
A solitary thing—"

Some alpine mountain, wrapt in snow,
Thus braves the whirling blast,
Eternal winter doomed to know,
No genial spring to taste.

In vain warm suns their influence shed
The zephyrs sport in vain,
He rears, unchanged, his barren head,
Whilst beauty decks the plain.

What though in scaly armour drest,
Indifference may repel
The shafts of wo—in such a breast
No joy can ever dwell.

'Tis woven in the world's great plan,
And fixed by heaven's decree,
That all the true delights of man
Should spring from *Sympathy*.

'Tis nature bids, and whilst the laws
Of nature we retain,
Our self-approving bosom draws
A pleasure from its pain.

Thus grief itself has comforts dear,
The sordid never know;
And ecstacy attends the tear,
When virtue bids it flow.

For, when it streams from that pure source,
No bribes the heart can win,
To check, or alter from its course
The luxury within.

Peace to the phlegm of sullen elves,
Who, if from labour eased,
Extend no care beyond themselves,
Unpleasing and unpleased.

Let no low thought suggest the prayer,
Oh! grant, kind heaven, to me,
Long as I draw ethereal air,
Sweet Sensibility.

Where'er the heavenly nymph is seen,
With lustre-beaming eye,
A train, attendant on their queen,
(Her rosy chorus) fly.

The jocund Loves in Hymen's band,
With torches ever bright,
And generous Friendship hand in hand,
With Pity's watery sight.

The gentler virtues too are joined,
In youth immortal warm,
The soft relations, which, combined,
Give life her every charm.

The arts come smiling in the close,
And lend celestial fire,
The marble breathes, the canvass glows,
The muses sweep the lyre.

"Still may my melting bosom cleave
To sufferings not my own,
And still the sigh responsive heave,
Where'er is heard a groan.

"So Pity shall take Virtue's part,
Her natural ally,
And fashioning my softened heart,
Prepare it for the sky."

This artless vow may heaven receive,
And you, fond maid, approve;
So may your guiding angel give
Whate'er you wish or love:

So may the rosy fingered hours
Lead on the various year,
And every joy, which now is yours,
Extend a larger sphere;

And suns to come, as round they wheel,
Your golden moments bless,
With all a tender heart can feel,
Or lively fancy guess.

A TALE,

FOUNDED ON A FACT WHICH HAPPENED IN JANUARY, 1779.

Where Humber pours his rich commercial stream,
There dwelt a wretch, who breathed but to blaspheme.
In subterraneous caves his life he led,
Black as the mine in which he wrought for bread.
When on a day, emerging from the deep,
A sabbath-day, (such sabbaths thousands keep!)
The wages of his weekly toil he bore
To buy a cock—whose blood might win him more;
As if the noblest of the feathered kind
Were but for battle and for death designed;
As if the consecrated hours were meant
For sport, to minds on cruelty intent;
It chanced (such chances Providence obey)
He met a fellow-labourer on the way,
Whose heart the same desires had once inflamed;
But now the savage temper was reclaimed.
Persuasion on his lips had taken place;
For all plead well who plead the cause of grace:
His iron-heart with Scripture he assailed,
Wooed him to hear a sermon, and prevailed.
His faithful bow the mighty preacher drew.
Swift, as the lightning-glance, the arrow flew.
He wept; he trembled; cast his eyes around,
To find a worse than he; but none he found.
He felt his sins, and wondered he should feel.
Grace made the wound, and grace alone could heal.
Now farewell oaths, and blasphemies, and lies!
He quits the sinner's for the martyr's prize.
That holy day which washed with many a tear,
Gilded with hope, yet shaded too by fear.
The next, his swarthy brethren of the mine
Learned, by his altered speech—the change divine
Laughed when they should have wept, and swore the day
Was nigh, when he would swear as fast as they.
"No, (said the penitent,) such words shall share
This breath no more; devoted now to prayer.
O! if thou see'st (thine eye the future sees)
That I shall yet again blaspheme, like these;
Now strike me to the ground, on which I kneel,
Ere yet this heart relapses into steel:
Now take me to that Heaven I once defied,
Thy presence, thy embrace!"—He spoke and died.

TO THE REV. MR. NEWTON,

ON HIS RETURN FROM RAMSGATE.

That ocean you have late surveyed,
Those rocks I too have seen,
But I, afflicted and dismayed,
You tranquil and serene.

You from the flood-controlling steep
Saw stretched before your view,
With conscious joy, the threatening deep,
No longer such to you.

To me, the waves that ceaseless broke
Upon the dangerous coast,
Hoarsely and ominously spoke
Of all my treasure lost.

Your sea of troubles you have past,
And found the peaceful shore;
I, tempest-tossed, and wrecked at last,
Come home to port no more.

A POETICAL EPISTLE TO LADY AUSTEN.

Dear Anna—between friend and friend,
Prose answers every common end;
Serves, in a plain and homely way,
T' express th' occurrence of the day;
Our health, the weather, and the news;
What walks we take, what books we choose;
And all the floating thoughts we find
Upon the surface of the mind.

But when a poet takes the pen,
Far more alive than other men,
He feels a gentle tingling come
Down to his finger and his thumb,
Derived from nature's noblest part,
The centre of a glowing heart:
And this is what the world, who knows
No flights above the pitch of prose,
His more sublime vagaries slighting,
Denominates an itch for writing.
No wonder I, who scribble rhyme
To catch the triflers of the time,
And tell them truths divine and clear,
Which, couched in prose, they will not hear;
Who labour hard t' allure and draw
The loiterers I never saw,
Should feel that itching, and that tingling,
With all my purpose intermingling,
To your intrinsic merit true,
When called t' address myself to you.

Mysterious are his ways, whose power
Brings forth that unexpected hour,
When minds, that never met before,
Shall meet, unite, and part no more:
It is th' allotment of the skies,
The hand of the Supremely Wise,
That guides and governs our affections,
And plans and orders our connexions:
Directs us in our distant road,
And marks the bounds of our abode.
Thus we were settled when you found us,
Peasants and children all around us,
Not dreaming of so dear a friend,
Deep in the abyss of Silver-End.*
Thus Martha, e'en against her will,
Perched on the top of yonder hill;
And you, though you must needs prefer
The fairer scenes of sweet Sancerre,†
Are come from distant Loire, to choose
A cottage on the banks of Ouse.
This page of Providence quite new,
And now just opening to our view,
Employs our present thoughts and pains
To guess, and spell, what it contains;
But day by day, and year by year,
Will make the dark enigma clear;
And furnish us, perhaps, at last,
Like other scenes already past,
With proof, that we, and our affairs,
Are part of a Jehovah's cares:
For God unfolds, by slow degrees,
The purport of his deep decrees;
Sheds every hour a clearer light
In aid of our defective sight;
And spreads, at length, before the soul,
A beautiful and perfect whole,
Which busy man's inventive brain
Toils to anticipate in vain.

Say, Anna, had you never known
The beauties of a rose full blown,
Could you, though luminous your eye,
By looking on the bud, descry,
Or guess, with a prophetic power,
The future splendour of the flower?
Just so, th' Omnipotent, who turns
The system of a world's concerns,
From mere minutiæ can educe
Events of most important use;
And bid a dawning sky display
The blaze of a meridian day.
The works of man tend, one and all,
As needs they must, from great so small;
And vanity absorbs at length
The monuments of human strength.
But who can tell how vast the plan
Which this day's incident began?
Too small, perhaps, the slight occasion,
For our dim-sighted observation;
It passed unnoticed, as the bird
That cleaves the yielding air unheard,
And yet may prove, when understood,
A harbinger of endless good.

Not that I deem, or mean to call
Friendship a blessing cheap or small:
But merely to remark, that ours,
Like some of nature's sweetest flowers,
Rose from a seed of tiny size,
That seemed to promise no such prize;
A transient visit intervening,
And made almost without a meaning,
(Hardly the effect of inclination,
Much less of pleasing expectation,)
Produced a friendship, then begun,
That has cemented us in one;
And placed it in our power to prove,
By long fidelity and love,
That Solomon has wisely spoken,
"A threefold cord is not soon broken."

* An obscure part of Olney, adjoining to the residence of Cowper, which faced the market-place.
† Lady Austen's residence in France.

SONG.*

Air—The Lass of Patie's Mill.

When all within is peace,
How Nature seems to smile!
Delights that never cease,
The live-long day beguile.
From morn to dewy eve,
With open hand she showers
Fresh blessings to deceive,
And sooth the silent hours.

It is content of heart
Gives nature power to please;
The mind that feels no smart,
Enlivens all it sees:
Can make a wintry sky
Seem bright as smiling May,
And evening's closing eye
As peep of early day.

The vast majestic globe,
So beauteously arrayed
In Nature's various robe
With wondrous skill displayed,
Is to a mourner's heart
A dreary wild at best;
It flutters to depart,
And longs to be at rest.

VERSES

SELECTED FROM AN OCCASIONAL POEM, ENTITLED VALEDICTION.

Oh Friendship! Cordial of the human breast
So little felt, so fervently professed!
Thy blossoms deck our unsuspecting years;
The promise of delicious fruit appears:
We hug the hopes of constancy and truth,
Such is the folly of our dreaming youth;
But soon, alas! detect the rash mistake
That sanguine inexperience loves to make;
And view with tears th' expected harvest lost,
Decayed by time, or withered by a frost,
Whoever undertakes a friend's great part
Should be renewed in nature, pure in heart,
Prepared for martyrdom, and strong to prove
A thousand ways the force of genuine love.
He may be called to give up health and gain,
T' exchange content for trouble, ease for pain,
To echo sigh for sigh, and groan for groan,
And wet his cheeks with sorrows not his own.
The heart of man, for such a task too frail,
When most relied on, is most sure to fail;
And, summoned to partake its fellow's wo,
Starts from its office, like a broken bow.
Votaries of business, and of pleasure prove
Faithless alike in friendship and in love.
Retired from all the circles of the gay,
And all the crowds, that bustle life away,
To scenes, where competition, envy, strife,
Beget no thunder-clouds to trouble life,
Let me, the charge of some good angel, find
One, who has known, and has escaped mankind;
Polite, yet virtuous, who has brought away
The manners, not the morals, of the day:
With him, perhaps with *her*, (for men have known
No firmer friendships than the fair have shown,)
Let me enjoy, in some unthought-of spot,
All former friends forgiven, and forgot,
Down to the close of life's fast fading scene,
Union of hearts, without a flaw between.
'Tis grace, 'tis bounty, and it calls for praise,
If God give health, that sunshine of our days!
And if he add, a blessing shared by few,
Content of heart, more praises still are due—
But if he grant a friend, that boon possessed,
Indeed is treasure, and crowns all the rest;
And giving one, whose heart is in the skies,
Born from above, and made divinely wise,
He gives, what bankrupt nature never can,
Whose noblest coin is light and brittle man,
Gold, purer far than Ophir ever knew,
A soul, an image of himself, and therefore true.

* Written at the request of Lady Austen.

EPITAPH ON JOHNSON.

Here Johnson lies—a sage by all allowed,
Whom to have bred, may well make England proud;
Whose prose was eloquence, by wisdom taught,
The graceful vehicle of virtuous thought;
Whose verse may claim—grave, masculine, and strong,
Superior praise to the mere poet's song;
Who many a noble gift from Heaven possessed,
And faith at last, alone worth all the rest.
O man, immortal by a double prize,
By fame on earth—by glory in the skies!

TO MISS C——, ON HER BIRTH-DAY

How many between east and west,
Disgrace their parent earth,
Whose deeds constrain us to detest
The day that gave them birth!

Not so when Stella's natal morn
Revolving months restore,
We can rejoice that she was born,
And wish her born once more.

GRATITUDE.

ADDRESSED TO LADY HESKETH.

This cap, that so stately appears,
With ribbon-bound tassel on high,
Which seems by the crest that it rears
Ambitious of brushing the sky:
This cap to my cousin I owe,
She gave it, and gave me beside,
Wreathed into an elegant bow,
The ribbon with which it is tied.

This wheel-footed studying chair,
Contrived both for toil and repose,
Wide elbowed and wadded with hair,
In which I both scribble and doze,
Bright studded to dazzle the eyes,
And rival in lustre of that
In which, or astronomy lies,
Fair Cassiopeïa sat:

These carpets, so soft to the foot,
Caledonia's traffic and pride,
O spare them ye knights of the boot,
Escaped from a cross-country ride.
This table and mirror within,
Secure from collision and dust,
At which I oft shave cheek and chin,
And periwig nicely adjust:

This moveable structure of shelves,
For its beauty admired and its use,
And charged with octavos and twelves,
The gayest I had to produce;
Where, flaming in scarlet and gold,
My poems enchanted I view,
And hope, in due time, to behold
My Iliad and Odyssey too;

This china, that decks the alcove,
Which here people call a buffet,
But what the gods call it above,
Has ne'er been revealed to us yet;
These curtains, that keep the room warm
Or cool, as the season demands,
These stoves that for pattern and form,
Seem the labour of Mulciber's hands:

All these are not half that I owe
To one from her earliest youth
To me ever ready to show
Benignity, friendship, and truth:
For time the destroyer declared
And foe of our perishing kind,
If even her face he has spared,
Much less could he alter her mind.

Thus compassed about with the goods
And chattels of leisure and ease,
I indulge my poetical moods
In many such fancies as these;
And fancies I fear they will seem—
Poet's goods are not often so fine;
The poets will swear that I dream,
When I sing of the splendour of mine.

THE FLATTING-MILL.

AN ILLUSTRATION.

When a bar of pure silver, or ingot of gold,
Is sent to be flatted or wrought into length,
It is passed between cylinders often and rolled
In an engine of utmost mechanical strength.

Thus tortured and squeezed, at last it appears
Like a loose heap of ribbon, a glittering show,
Like music it tinkles and rings in your ears,
And, warmed by the pressure, is all in a glow.

This process achieved, it is doomed to sustain
The thump-after-thump of a goldbeater's mallet,
And at last is of service in sickness or pain
To cover a pill for a delicate palate.

Alas for the poet! who dares undertake
To urge reformation of national ill—
His head and his heart are both likely to ache
With the double employment of mallet and mill.

If he wish to instruct, he must learn to delight,
Smooth, ductile, and even, his fancy must flow,
Must tinkle and glitter like gold to the sight,
And catch in its progress a sensible glow.

After all, he must beat it as thin and as fine
As the leaf that unfolds what an invalid swallows,
For truth is unwelcome, however divine,
And unless you adorn it a nausea follows.

TO MRS. THROCKMORTON,

ON HER BEAUTIFUL TRANSCRIPT OF HORACE'S ODE, AD LIBRUM SUUM.

Maria, could Horace have guessed
What honour awaited his ode,
To his own little volume addressed,
The honour which you have bestowed,
Who have traced it in characters here
So elegant, even and neat,
He had laughed at the critical sneer,
Which he seems to have trembled to meet.

And sneer if you please he had said,
A nymph shall hereafter arise,
Who shall give me, when you are all dead,
The glory your malice denies.
Shall dignity give to my lay,
Although but a mere bagatelle;
And even a poet shall say,
Nothing ever was written so well.

STANZAS

On the late indecent liberties taken with the remains of the great Milton—Anno 1790.

"Me too, perchance, in future days,
The sculptured stone shall show,
With Paphian myrtle or with bays
Parnassian on my brow.

"But I, or ere that season come,
Escaped from every care,
Shall reach my refuge in the tomb,
And sleep securely there."*

So sang, in Roman tone and style,
The youthful bard, ere long
Ordained to grace his native isle
With her sublimest song.

Who then but must conceive disdain,
Hearing the deed unblest
Of wretches who have dared profane
His dread sepulchral rest?

Ill fare the hands that heaved the stones
Where Milton's ashes lay,
That trembled not to grasp his bones
And steal his dust away!

O ill-requited bard! neglect
Thy living worth repaid,
And blind idolatrous respect
As much affronts thee dead.

TO MRS. KING.

On her kind Present to the Author, a Patch-work Counterpane of her own making.

The Bard, if e'er he feel at all,
Must sure be quickened by a call
Both on his heart and head,
To pay with tuneful thanks the care
And kindness of a lady fair
Who deigns to deck his bed.

A bed like this, in ancient time,
On Ida's barren top sublime,
(As Homer's Epic shows)
Composed of sweetest vernal flowers,
Without the aid of sun and showers,
For Jove and Juno rose.

Less beautiful, however gay,
Is that which in the scorching day
Receives the weary swain
Who, laying his long scythe aside,
Sleeps on some bank with daisies pied,
Till roused to toil again.

What labours of the loom I see!
Looms numberless have groaned for me!
Should every maiden come
To scramble for the patch that bears
The impress of the robe she wears,
The bell would toll for some.

And oh, what havoc would ensue!
This bright display of every hue
All in a moment fled!
As if a storm should strip the bowers
Of all their tendrils, leaves, and flowers—
Each pocketing a shred.

Thanks, then, to every gentle fair
Who will not come to peck me bare,
As bird of borrowed feather,
And thanks, to One, above them all,
The gentle Fair of Pertenhall,
Who put the whole together.

THE JUDGMENT OF THE POETS.

Two nymphs, both nearly of an age,
Of numerous charms possessed,
A warm dispute once chanced to wage,
Whose temper was the best.

The worth of each had been complete,
Had both alike been mild:
But one, although her smile was sweet,
Frowned oftener than she smiled.
And in her humour, when she frowned,
Would raise her voice and roar,
And shake with fury to the ground
The garland that she wore.

The other was of gentler cast,
From all such frenzy clear,
Her frowns were seldom known to last,
And never proved severe.

To poets of renown in song
The nymphs referred the cause,
Who, strange to tell, all judged it wrong,
And gave misplaced applause.

They gentle called, and kind and soft,
The flippant and the scold,
And though she changed her mood so oft,
That failing left untold.

No judges, sure, were e'er so mad,
Or so resolved to err—
In short, the charms her sister had
They lavished all on her.

* Forsitan et nostros ducat de marmore vultus
Necteus aut Paphia myrti aut Parnasside lauri
Fronde comas—At ego secura pace quiesquam.
Milton in Mansa.

Then thus the god whom fondly they
Their great inspirer call,
Was heard, one genial summer's day,
To reprimand them all:

Since thus ye have combined," he said,
"My favourite nymph to slight,
Adorning May, that peevish maid,
With June's undoubted right,

"The minx shall, for your folly's sake,
Still prove herself a shrew,
Shall make your scribbling fingers ache,
And pinch your noses blue."

EPITAPH

ON MRS. M. HIGGINS, OF WESTON.

Laurels may flourish round the conqueror's tomb,
But happiest they, who win the world to come:
Believers have a silent field to fight,
And their exploits are veiled from human sight.
They in some nook, where little known they dwell,
Kneel, pray in faith, and rout the hosts of hell;
Eternal triumphs crown their toils divine,
And all those triumphs, Mary, now are thine.

THE RETIRED CAT.

A Poet's Cat, sedate and grave
As poet well could wish to have,
Was much addicted to inquire
For nooks to which she might retire,
And where, secure as mouse in chink,
She might repose, or sit and think.
I know not where she caught the trick
Nature perhaps herself had cast her
In such a mould philosophique,
Or else she learned it of her master.
Sometimes ascending, debonair,
An apple-tree, or lofty pear,
Lodged with convenience in the fork,
She watched the gardener at his work;
Sometimes her ease and solace sought
In an old empty watering-pot,
There wanting nothing, save a fan,
To seem some nymph in her sedan,
Appareled in exactest sort,
And ready to be borne to court.

But love of change it seems has place
Not only in our wiser race;
Cats also feel, as well as we,
That passion's force, and so did she.
Her climbing, she began to find,
Exposed her too much to the wind,
And the old utensil of tin
Was cold and comfortless within:
She therefore wished, instead of those,
Some place of more serene repose,
Where neither cold might come, nor air
Too rudely wanton with her hair,
And sought it in the likeliest mode
Within her master's snug abode.

A drawer it chanced, at bottom lined
With linen of the softest kind,
With such as merchants introduce
From India, for the ladies' use;
A drawer impending o'er the rest,
Half open in the topmost chest,
Of depth enough, and none to spare,
Invited her to slumber there;
Puss with delight, beyond expression,
Surveyed the scene and took possession.
Recumbent at her ease, ere long,
And lulled by her own humdrum song,
She left the cares of life behind,
And slept as she would sleep her last,
When in came, housewifely inclined,
The chambermaid, and shut it fast,
By no malignity impelled,
But all unconscious whom it held.

Awakened by the shock, (cried puss)
"Was ever cat attended thus!
The open drawer was left, I see,
Merely to prove a nest for me,
For soon as I was well composed,
Then came the maid, and it was closed.
How smooth these 'kerchiefs, and how sweet!
Oh what a delicate retreat!
I will resign myself to rest
Till Sol declining in the west,
Shall call to supper, when, no doubt,
Susan will come, and let me out."

The evening came, the sun descended,
And puss remained still unattended.
The night rolled tardily away,
(With her indeed 'twas never day)
The sprightly morn her course renewed,
The evening gray again ensued,
And puss came into mind no more,
Than if entombed the day before;
With hunger pinched, and pinched for room,
She now presaged approaching doom.
Nor slept a single wink, nor purred,
Conscious of jeopardy incurred.

That night, by chance, the poet, watching,
Heard an inexplicable scratching;
His noble heart went pit-a-pat,
And to himself he said—"what's that?"
He drew the curtain at his side,
And forth he peeped, but nothing spied.

Yet, by his ear directed, guessed
Something imprisoned in the chest
And, doubtful what, with prudent care
Resolved it should continue there.
At length a voice which well he knew,
A long and melancholy mew,
Saluting his poetic ears,
Consoled him and dispelled his fears;
He left his bed, he trod the floor,
He 'gan in haste the drawers explore,
The lowest first, and without stop
The rest in order to the top.
For 'tis a truth well known to most,
That whatsoever thing is lost,
We seek it, ere it come to light,
In every cranny but the right.
Forth skipped the cat, not now replete
As erst with airy self-conceit,
Nor in her own fond comprehension,
A theme for all the world's attention,
But modest, sober, cured of all
Her notions hyperbolical,
And wishing for a place of rest,
Any thing rather than a chest.
Then stepped the poet into bed
With this reflection in his head.

MORAL.

Beware of too sublime a sense
Of your own worth and consequence.
The man who dreams himself so great,
And his importance of such weight,
That all around in all that's done
Must move and act for him alone,
Will learn in school of tribulation
The folly of his expectation.

TO THE NIGHTINGALE,

WHICH THE AUTHOR HEARD SING ON NEW-YEAR'S DAY.

WHENCE is it, that amazed I hear
From yonder withered spray,
This foremost morn of all the year,
The melody of May?

And why, since thousands would be proud
Of such a favour shown,
Am I selected from the crowd
To witness it alone?

Sing'st thou, sweet Philomel, to me,
For that I also long
Have practised in the groves like thee,
Though not like thee in song?

Or sing'st thou rather under force
Of some divine command,
Commissioned to presage a course
Of happier days at hand?

Thrice welcome then! for many a long
And joyless year have I,
As thou to-day, put forth my song
Beneath a wintry sky.

But thee no wintry skies can harm,
Who only need'st to sing,
To make e'en January charm,
And every season Spring.

SONNET.

TO WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

THY country, Wilberforce, with just disdain,
Hears thee by cruel men and impious called
Frantic, for thy zeal to loose the enthralled
From exile, public sale, and slavery's chain.
Friend of the poor, the wronged, the fetter-galled,
Fear not lest labour such as thine be vain.
Thou hast achieved a part; hast gained the ear
Of Britain's senate to thy glorious cause;
Hope smiles, joy springs, and though cold caution pause
And weave delay, the better hour is near
That shall remunerate thy toils severe
By peace for Afric, fenced with British laws.

Enjoy what thou hast won, esteem and love
From all the just on earth, and all the blest above.

EPIGRAM.

PRINTED IN THE NORTHAMPTON MERCURY.

To purify their wine some people bleed
A lamb into the barrel, and succeed;
No nostrum, planters say, is half so good
To make fine sugar, as a *negro's* blood.
Now *lambs* and *negroes* both are harmless things,
And thence perhaps the wondrous virtue springs.
'Tis in the blood of innocence alone—
Good cause why planters never try their own.

TO DR. AUSTIN,

OF CECIL-STREET, LONDON.

AUSTIN! accept a grateful verse from me,
The poet's treasure, no inglorious fee.
Loved by the Muses, thy ingenuous mind
Pleasing requital in my verse may find;
Verse oft has dashed the scythe of Time aside;
Immortalizing names which else had died.
And O! could I command the glittering wealth
With which sick kings are glad to purchase health;

Yet, if extensive fame and sure to live,
Were in the power of verse like mine to give,
I would not recompense his art with less,
Who, giving Mary health, heals my distress.

Friend of my friend!* I love thee, tho' unknown,
And boldly call thee, being his, my own.

SONNET.

ADDRESSED TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Hayley—thy tenderness fraternal shown,
In our first interview, delightful guest!
To Mary and me for her dear sake distressed,
Such as it is has made my heart thy own,
Though heedless now of new engagements grown;
For threescore winters make a wintry breast,
And I had purposed ne'er to go in quest
Of Friendship more, except with God alone;
But thou hast won me: nor is God my foe,
Who ere this last afflictive scene began,
Sent thee to mitigate the dreadful blow.
My brother, by whose sympathy I know
Thy true deserts infallibly to scan,
Not more t' admire the bard than love the man.

CATHARINA.

On her Marriage to George Courtnay, Esq.

Believe it or not as you choose,
The doctrine is certainly true,
That the future is known to the muse,
And poets are oracles too.
I did but express a desire
To see Catharina at home,
At the side of my friend George's fire,
And lo—she is actually come.

Such prophecy some may despise,
But the wish of a poet and friend
Perhaps is approved in the skies,
And therefore attains to its end.
'Twas a wish that flew ardently forth
From a bosom effectually warmed
With the talents, the graces, and worth
Of the person for whom it was formed.

Maria† would leave us, I knew,
To the grief and regret of us all,
But less to our grief, could we view
Catharina the queen of the hall.
And therefore I wished as I did,
And therefore this union of hands
Not a whisper was heard to forbid,
But all cry—amen—to the bans.

Since therefore I seem to incur
No danger of wishing in vain,
When making good wishes for her,
I will e'en to my wishes again—
With one I have made her a wife,
And now I will try with another,
Which I can not suppress for my life—
How soon I can make her a mother.

SONNET.

TO GEORGE ROMNEY, ESQ.

On his picture of me in crayons, drawn at Eartham in the 61st year of my age, and in the months of August and September, 1792.

Romney expert, infallibly to trace
On chart or canvass, not the form alone
And semblance, but, however faintly shown,
The mind's impression too on every face—
With strokes that time ought never to erase,
Thou hast so penciled mine, that though I own
The subject worthless, I have never known
The artist shining with superior grace.
But this I mark—that symptoms none of wo
In thy incomparable work appear.
Well—I am satisfied it should be so,
Since, on maturer thought, the cause is clear;
For in my looks what sorrow couldst thou see
When I was Hayley's guest, and sat to thee?

ON RECEIVING HAYLEY'S PICTURE.

In language warm as could be breathed or penned,
Thy picture speaks th' original, my friend,
Not by those looks that indicate thy mind—
They only speak thee friend of all mankind;
Expression here more soothing still I see,
That friend of *all* a partial friend to *me*.

ON A PLANT OF VIRGIN'S BOWER.

DESIGNED TO COVER A GARDEN-SEAT.

Thrive, gentle plant! and weave a bower
For Mary and for me,
And deck with many a splendid flower
Thy foliage large and free.

Thou cam'st from Eartham, and wilt shade
(If truly I divine)
Some future day th' illustrious head
Of Him who made thee mine.

*Hayley. †Lady Throckmorton.

Should Daphne show a jealous frown,
And envy seize the bay,
Affirming none so fit to crown
Such honoured brows as they.

Thy cause with zeal we shall defend,
And with convincing power;
For why should not the virgin's friend
Be crowned with virgin's bower?

TO MY COUSIN, ANNE BODHAM,

ON RECEIVING FROM HER A NET-WORK PURSE, MADE BY HERSELF.

My gentle Anne, whom heretofore,
When I was young, and thou no more
Than plaything for a nurse,
I danced and fondled on my knee,
A kitten both in size and glee,
I thank thee for my purse.

Gold pays the worth of all things here;
But not of love;—that gem's too dear
For richest rogues to win it;
I, therefore, as a proof of love,
Esteem thy present far above
The best things kept within it.

TO MRS. UNWIN.

Mary! I want a lyre with other strings,
Such aid from heaven as some have feigned they drew,
An eloquence scarce given to mortals, new
And undebased by praise of meaner things,
That ere through age or wo I shed my wings,
I may record thy worth with honour due,
In verse as musical as thou art true,
And that immortalizes whom it sings.

But thou hast little need. There is a book
By seraphs writ with beams of heavenly light,
On which the eyes of God not rarely look,
A chronicle of actions just and bright;

There all thy deeds, my faithful Mary, shine,
And, since thou own'st that praise, I spare thee mine.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Dear architect of fine chateaux in air,
Worthier to stand for ever, if they could,
Than any built of stone, or yet of wood,
For back of royal elephant to bear!
O for permission from the skies to share,
Much to my own, though little to thy good,
With thee (not subject to the jealous mood!)
A partnership of literary ware!

But I am bankrupt now; and doomed henceforth
To drudge, in descant dry, on others' lays;
Bards, I acknowledge, of unequalled worth!
But what is commentator's happiest praise!

That he has furnished lights for other eyes,
Which they, who need them, use, and then despise.

ON A SPANIEL, CALLED BEAU,

KILLING A YOUNG BIRD.

A spaniel, Beau, that fares like you,
Well-fed, and at his ease,
Should wiser be than to pursue
Each trifle that he sees.

But you have killed a tiny bird,
Which flew not till to-day,
Against my orders, whom you heard
Forbidding you the prey.

Nor did you kill that you might eat,
And ease a doggish pain,
For him, though chased with furious heat,
You left where he was slain.

Nor was he of the thievish sort,
Or one whom blood allures,
But innocent was all his sport
Whom you have torn for yours.

My dog! what remedy remains,
Since, teach you all I can,
I see you, after all my pains,
So much resemble man?

BEAU'S REPLY.

Sir, when I flew to seize the bird
In spite of your command,
A louder voice than yours I heard,
And harder to withstand.

You cried—forbear—but in my breast
A mightier cried—proceed—
'Twas Nature, sir, whose strong behest
Impelled me to the deed.

Yet much as nature I respect,
I ventured once to break,
(As you perhaps may recollect)
Her precept for your sake;

And when your linnet on a day,
Passing his prison door,
Had fluttered all his strength away,
And panting pressed the floor,

Well knowing him a sacred thing,
Not destined to my tooth,
I only kissed his ruffled wing,
And licked the feathers smooth.

Let my obedience *then* excuse
My disobedience *now*,
Nor some reproof yourselves refuse
From your aggrieved bow-wow;

If killing brids be such a crime,
(Which I can hardly see,)
What think you, sir, of killing Time
With verse addressed to me?

TO MARY.

The twentieth year is well nigh past,
Since our first sky was overcast,
Ah would that this might be the last!
My Mary!

'Thy spirits have a fainter flow,
I see them daily weaker grow——
'Twas my distress that brought thee low
My Mary!

Thy needles, once a shining store,
For my sake restless heretofore,
Now rust disused, and shine no more,
My Mary!

For though thou gladly wouldst fulfil
The same kind office for me still,
Thy sight now seconds not thy will,
My Mary!

But well thou playd'st the housewife's part,
And all thy threads with magic art,
Have wound themselves about this heart,
My Mary!

Thy indistinct expressions seem
Like language uttered in a dream;
Yet me they charm, whate'er the theme,
My Mary!

Thy silver locks once auburn bright,
Are still more lovely in my sight
Than golden beams of orient light,
My Mary!

For could I view nor them nor thee,
What sight worth seeing could I see?
The sun would rise in vain for me,
My Mary!

Partakers of thy sad decline,
Thy hands their little force resign;
Yet gently prest, press gently mine,
My Mary!

Such feebleness of limbs thou prov'st,
That now at every step thou mov'st,
Upheld by two, yet still thou lov'st,
My Mary!

And still to love, though prest with ill,
In wintry age to feel no chill,
With me is to be lovely still,
My Mary!

But ah! by constant heed I know,
How oft the sadness that I show,
Transforms thy smiles to looks of wo,
My Mary!

And should my future lot be cast
With much resemblance of the past,
Thy worn-out heart will break at last,
My Mary!

ON THE ICE ISLANDS,

SEEN FLOATING IN THE GERMAN OCEAN.

What portents, from that distant region, ride,
Unseen till now in ours, the astonished tide?
In ages past, old Proteus, with his droves
Of seacalves, sought the mountains and the groves.
But now, descending whence of late they stood,
Themselves the mountains seem to rove the flood.
Dire times were they, full-charged with human woes;
And these, scarce less calamitous than those.
What view we now? More wondrous still? Behold!
Like burnished brass they shine, or beaten gold;
And all around the pearl's pure splendour show,
And all around the ruby's fiery glow.
Come they from India, where the burning earth,
All bounteous, gives her richest treasures birth;
And where the costly gems, that beam around
The brows of mightiest potentates, are found?
No. Never such a countless dazzling store
Had left, unseen, the Ganges' peopled shore.
Rapacious hands, and ever-watchful eyes,
Should sooner far have marked and seized the prize.
Whence sprang they then? Ejected have they come
From Ves'vius', or from Ætna's burning womb?
Thus shine they self-illumed, or but display
The borrowed splendours of a cloudless day?
With borrowed beams they shine. The gales, that breathe
Now landward, and the current's force beneath,
Have borne them nearer: and the nearer sight,
Advantaged more, contemplates them aright.
Their lofty summits crested high, they show,
With mingled sleet, and long-incumbent snow.
The rest is ice. Far hence, where most, severe,
Bleak winter well-nigh saddens all the year,

Their infant growth began. He bade arise
Their uncouth forms, portentous in our eyes.
Oft as dissolved by transient suns, the snow
Left the tall cliff, to join the flood below;
He caught, and curdled with a freezing blast
The current, ere it reached the boundless waste.
By slow degrees uprose the wondrous pile,
And long successive ages rolled the while;
Till, ceaseless in its growth, it claimed to stand,
Tall as its rival mountains on the land.
Thus stood, and unremoveable by skill,
Or force of man, had stood the structure still;
But that, though firmly fixed, supplanted yet
By pressure of its own enormous weight,
It left the shelving beach—and, with a sound
That shook the bellowing waves and rocks around
Self-launched, and swiftly, to the briny wave,
As if instinct with strong desire to lave,
Down went the ponderous mass. So bards of old,
How Delos swam th' Ægean deep, have told.
But not of ice was Delos. Delos bore
Herb, fruit, and flower. She, crowned with laurel, wore,
Even under wintry skies, a summer smile;
And Delos was Apollo's favourite isle.
But, horrid wanderers of the deep, to you,
He deems cimmerian darkness only due.
Your hated birth he deigned not to survey,
But, scornful, turned his glorious eyes away.
Hence! seek your home, nor longer rashly dare
The darts of Phœbus, and a softer air;
Lest ye regret, too late, your native coast,
In no congenial gulf for ever lost!

THE CASTAWAY.

Obscurest night involved the sky;
Th' Atlantic billows roared,
When such a destined wretch as I,
Washed headlong from on board,
Of friends, of hopes, of all bereft,
His floating home for ever left.

No braver chief could Albion boast,
Than he, with whom we went,
Nor ever ship left Albion's coast,
With warmer wishes sent.
He loved them both, but both in vain,
Nor him beheld, nor her again.

Not long beneath the whelming brine,
Expert to swim he lay;
Nor soon he felt his strength decline,
Or courage die away;
But waged with death a lasting strife,
Supported by despair of life.

He shouted; nor his friends had failed
To check the vessel's course,
But so the furious blast prevailed,
That, pitiless, perforce,
They left their outcast mate behind,
And scudded still before the wind.

Some succour yet they could afford;
And, such as storms allow,
The cask, the coop, the floated cord,
Delayed not to bestow;
But he (they knew) nor ship nor shore,
Whate'er they gave, should visit more.

Nor, cruel as it seemed, could he,
Their haste himself condemn,
Aware that flight, in such a sea,
Alone could rescue them;
Yet bitter felt it still to die
Deserted, and his friends so nigh.

He long survives, who lives an hour
In ocean self-upheld:
And so long he, with unspent power
His destiny repelled:
And ever as the minutes flew,
Entreated help, or cried—"Adieu!"

At length, his transient respite past,
His comrades, who before
Had heard his voice in every blast,
Could catch the sound no more.
For then, by toil subdued, he drank
The stifling wave, and then he sank.

No poet wept him: but the page
Of narrative sincere,
That tells his name, his worth, his age,
Is wet with Anson's tear.
And tears by bards or heroes shed
Alike immortalize the dead.

I therefore purpose not, or dream,
Descanting on his fate,
To give the melancholy theme
A more enduring date.
But misery still delights to trace
Its 'semblance in another's case.

No voice divine the storm allayed
No light propitious shone;
When, snatched from all effectual aid,
We perished each alone:
But I beneath a rougher sea,
And whelmed in deeper gulfs than he.

Translations from Vincent Bourne

I. THE GLOW-WORM.

Beneath the hedge, or near the stream,
A worm is known to stray;
That shows by night a lucid beam.
Which disappears by day.

Disputes have been, and still prevail,
From whence his rays proceed;
Some give that honour to his tail,
And others to his head.

But this is sure—the hand of night,
That kindles up the skies,
Gives *him* a modicum of light
Proportioned to his size.

Perhaps indulgent Nature meant,
By such a lamp bestowed,
To bid the traveller, as he went,
Be careful where he trod:

Nor crush a worm, whose useful light
Might serve, however small,
To show a stumbling-stone by night,
And save him from a fall.

Whate'er she meant, this truth divine
Is legible and plain,
'Tis power almighty bids him shine,
Nor bids him shine in vain.

Ye proud and wealthy, let this theme
Teach humbler thoughts to you,
Since such a reptile has its gem,
And boasts its splendour too.

II. THE JACKDAW.

There is a bird, who by his coat,
And by the hoarseness of his note,
Might be supposed a crow;
A great frequenter of the church,
Where bishop-like he finds a perch,
And dormitory too.

Above the steeple shines a plate,
That turns and turns, to indicate
From what point blows the weather.
Look up—your brains begin to swim,
'Tis in the clouds—that pleases him,
He chooses it the rather.

Fond of the speculative height,
Thither he wings his airy flight,
And thence securely sees
The bustle and the rareeshow
That occupy mankind below
Secure and at his ease.

You think, no doubt, he sits and muses
On future broken bones and bruises,
If he should chance to fall.
No; not a single thought like that
Employs his philosophic pate,
Or troubles it at all.

He sees that this great roundabout,
The world, with all its motley rout,
Church, army, physic, law,
Its customs, and its business,
Is no concern at all of his,
And says—what says he?—Caw.

Thrice happy bird! I too have seen
Much of the vanities men;
And, sick of having seen 'em,
Would cheerfully these limbs resign
For such a pair of wings as thine,
And such a head between 'em.

III. THE CRICKET.

Little inmate, full of mirth,
Chirping on my kitchen hearth.
Wheresoe'er be thine abode,
Always harbinger of good,
Pay me for thy warm retreat
With a song more soft and sweet;
In return thou shalt receive
Such a strain as I can give.

Thus thy praise shall be expressed,
Inoffensive, welcome guest!
While the rat is on the scout,
And the mouse with curious snout,
With what vermin else infest
Every dish, and spoil the best,
Frisking thus before the fire,
Thou hast all thine heart's desire.

Though in voice and shape they be
Formed as if akin to thee,
Thou surpassest, happier far,
Happiest grasshoppers that are;
Theirs is but a summer's song,
Thine endures the winter long,
Unimpaired, and shrill, and clear,
Melody throughout the year.

Neither night, nor dawn of day,
Puts a period to thy play:
Sing then—and extend thy span
Far beyond the date of man.
Wretched man whose years are spent
In repining discontent,
Lives not, aged though he be,
Half a span, compared with thee.

IV. THE PARROT.

In painted plumes superbly dressed,
A native of the gorgeous east,
By many a billow tossed,
Poll gains at length the British shore,
Part of the captain's precious store,
A present to his toast.

Belinda's maids are soon preferred,
To teach him now and then a word,
As Poll can master it;
But 'tis her own important charge,
To qualify him more at large,
And make him quite a wit.

Sweet Poll! his doating mistress cries,
Sweet Poll! the mimic bird replies;
And calls aloud for sack.
She next instructs him in the kiss;
'Tis now a little one, like Miss,
And now a hearty smack.

At first he aims at what he hears;
And listening close with both his ears,
Just catches at the sound;
But soon articulates aloud,
Much to th' amusement of the crowd,
And stuns the neighbours round.

A querulous old woman's voice
His humorous talent next employs;
He scolds, and gives the lie.
And now he sings, and now is sick,
Here, Sally, Susan, come, come quick,
Poor Poll is like to die!

Belinda and her bird! 'tis rare
To meet with such a well-matched pair,
The language and the tone,
Each character in every part
Sustained with so much grace and art,
And both in unison.

When children first begin to spell,
And stammer out a syllable,
We think them tedious creatures;
But difficultics soon abate,
When birds are to be taught to prate,
And women are the teachers.

V. THE THRACIAN.

Thracian parents, at his birth,
Mourn their babe with many a tear,
But with undissembled mirth
Place him breathless on his bier.

Greece and Rome, with equal scorn,
'O the savages!' exclaim,
'Whether they rejoice or mourn,
Well entitled to the name!'

But the cause of this concern,
And this pleasure would they trace,
Even they might somewhat learn
From the savages of Thrace.

VI. RECIPROCAL KINDNESS.

THE PRIMARY LAW OF NATURE.

Androcles from his injured lord, in dread
Of instant death, to Libya's desert fled.
Tired with his toilsome flight, and parched with heat,
He spied, at length, a cavern's cool retreat,
But scarce had given to rest his weary frame
When hugest of his kind, a lion came:
He roared approaching: but the savage din
To plaintive murmurs changed, arrived within,
And with expressive looks his lifted paw
Presenting, aid implored from whom he saw.
The fugitive, through terror at a stand,
Dared not awhile afford his trembling hand,
But bolder grown, at length inherent found
A pointed thorn, and drew it from the wound.
The cure was wrought; he wiped the sanious blood,
And firm and free from pain the lion stood,
Again he seeks the wilds, and day by day,
Regales his inmate with the parted prey.
Nor he disdains the dole, though unprepared,
Spread on the ground, and with a lion shared.
But thus to live—still lost—sequestered still—
Scarce seemed his lord's revenge a heavier ill.
Home! native home! O might he but repair!
He must—he will, though death attends him there.
He goes, and doomed to perish, on the sands
Of the full theatre unpitied stands:
When lo! the self-same lion from his cage
Flies to devour him, famished into rage.
He flies, but viewing in his purposed prey
The man, his healer, pauses on his way,
And softened by remembrance into sweet
And kind composure, crouches at his feet.

Mute with astonishment th' assembly gaze:
But why, ye Romans? Whence your mute amaze?
All this is natural: nature bade him rend
An enemy; she bids him spare a friend.

VII. A MANUAL.

More ancient than the Art of Printing, and not to be found in any Catalogue.

There is a book, which we may call
(Its excellence is such)
Alone a library, though small;
The ladies thumb it much.

Words none, things numerous it contains:
And, things with words compared,
Who needs be told, that has his brains,
Which merits most regard?

Ofttimes its leaves of scarlet hue
A golden edging boast;
And opened, it displays to view
Twelve pages at the most.

Nor name, nor title, stamped behind,
Adorns his outer part;
But all within 'tis richly lined,
A magazine of art.

The whitest hands that secret hoard
Oft visit: and the fair
Preserve it in their bosoms stored,
As with a miser's care.

Thence implements of every size,
And formed for various use,
(They need but to consult their eyes)
They readily produce.

The largest and the longest kind
Possess the foremost page,
A sort most needed by the blind,
Or nearly such from age.

The full-charged leaf, which next ensues,
Presents, in bright array,
The smaller sort, which matrons use,
Not quite so blind as they.

The third, the fourth, the fifth supply
What their occasions ask,
Who with a more discerning eye
Perform a nicer task.

But still with regular decrease
From size to size they fall,
In every leaf grow less and less;
The last are least of all.

O! what a fund of genius, pent
In narrow space, is here!
This volume's method and intent
How luminous and clear!

It leaves no reader at a loss
Or posed, whoever reads:
No commentator's tedious gloss,
Nor even index needs.

Search Bodley's many thousands o'er,
Nor book is treasured there,
Nor yet in Granta's numerous store,
That may with this compare.

No! Rival none in either host
Of this was ever seen,
Or, that contents could justly boast,
So brilliant and so keen.

VIII. AN ENIGMA.

A Needle small as small can be,
In bulk and use surpasses me,
Nor is my purchase dear;
For little, and almost for naught,
As many of my kind are bought
As days are in the year.

Yet though but little use we boast,
And are procured at little cost,
The labour is not light,
Nor few artificers it asks,
All skilful in their several tasks,
To fashion us aright.

One fuses metal o'er the fire,
A second draws it into wire,
The shears another plies,
Who clips in lengths the brazen thread,
For him, who, chafing every thread,
Gives all an equal size.

A fifth prepares, exact and round,
The knob with which it must be crowned;
His follower makes it fast:
And with his mallet and his file
To shape the point employs awhile
The seventh and the last.

Now, therefore, Œdipus! declare
What creature, wonderful and rare,
A process that obtains
Its purpose with so much ado,
At last produces!—tell me true,
And take me for your pains!

IX. SPARROWS SELF-DOMESTICATED.

IN TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

None ever shared the social feast,
Or as an inmate or a guest,
Beneath the celebrated dome,
Where once Sir Isaac had his home,
Who saw not (and with some delight
Perhaps he viewed the novel sight)
How numerous, at the tables there,
The sparrows beg their daily fare.
For there, in every nook and cell,
Where such a family may dwell,
Sure as the vernal season comes
Their nests they weave in hope of crumbs,
Which kindly given, may serve, with food
Convenient, their unfeathered brood;
And oft as with its summons clear,
The warning bell salutes the ear,

Sagacious listeners to the sound,
They flock from all the fields around,
To reach the hospitable hall,
None more attentive to the call,
Arrived, the pensionary band,
Hopping and chirping, close at hand,
Solicit what they soon receive,
The sprinkled, plenteous donative.
Thus is a multitude, though large,
Supported at a trivial charge;
A single doit would overpay
Th' expenditure of every day,
And who can grudge so small a grace
To suppliants, natives of the place.

X. FAMILIARITY DANGEROUS.

As in her ancient mistress' lap
The youthful tabby lay,
They gave each other many a tap,
Alike disposed to play.

But strife ensues. Puss waxes warm,
And with protruded claws
Ploughs all the length of Lydia's arm,
Mere wantonness the cause.

At once, resentful of the deed,
She shakes her to the ground,
With many a threat that she shall bleed
With still a deeper wound.

But, Lydia, bid thy fury rest;
It was a venial stroke;
For she that will with kittens jest,
Should bear a kitten's joke.

XI. INVITATION TO THE RED-BREAST.

Sweet bird, whom the winter constrains—
And seldom another it can—
To seek a retreat, while he reigns,
In the well sheltered dwellings of man.
Who never can seem to intrude,
Tho' in all places equally free,
Come, oft as the season is rude,
Thou art sure to be welcome to me.

At sight of the first feeble ray,
That pierces the clouds of the east,
To inveigle thee every day
My windows shall show thee a feast
For, taught by experience, I know
Thee mindful of benefit long;
And that, thankful for all I bestow,
Thou wilt pay me with many a song.

Then, soon as the swell of the buds
Bespeaks the renewal of spring,
Fly hence, if thou wilt, to the woods,
Or where it shall please thee to sing:
And shouldst thou, compelled by a frost,
Come again to my window or door,
Doubt not an affectionate host,
Only pay as thou pay'dst me before.

Thus music must needs be confest,
To flow from a fountain above;
Else how should it work in the breast
Unchangeable friendship and love!
And who on the globe can be found,
Save your generation and ours,
That can be delighted by sound,
Or boasts any musical powers?

XII. STRADA'S NIGHTINGALE.

The Shepherd touched his reed; sweet Philomel
Essayed, and oft assayed to catch the strain,
And treasuring, as on her ear they fell,
The numbers, echoed note for note again.

The peevish youth, who ne'er had found before
A rival of his skill, indignant heard,
And soon, (for various was his tuneful store)
In loftier tones defied the simple bird.

She dared the task, and rising, as he rose,
With all the force, that passion gives, inspired,
Returned the sounds awhile, but in the close,
Exhausted fell, and at his feet expired.

Thus strength, not skill, prevailed. O fatal strife,
By thee, poor songstress, playfully begun;
And, O sad victory, which cost thy life,
And he may wish that he had never won!

XIII. ODE

ON THE DEATH OF A LADY,

Who lived one hundred years, and died on her birthday 1728.

Ancient dame how wide and vast,
To a race like ours appears,
Rounded to an orb at last,
All thy multitude of years!

We, the herd of human kind,
Frailer and of feebler powers;
We, to narrow bounds confined,
Soon exhaust the sum of ours.

Death's delicious banquet—we
Perish even from the womb,
Swifter than a shadow flee,
Nourished but to feed the tomb.

Seeds of merciless disease
Lurk in all that we enjoy;
Some, that waste us by degrees,
Some, that suddenly destroy.

And if life o'erleap the bourn
Common to the sons of men;
What remains, but that we mourn,
Dream, and doat, and drivel then?

Fast as moons can wax and wane,
Sorrow comes; and while we groan,
Pant with anguish and complain,
Half our years are fled and gone.

If a few, (to few 'tis given)
Lingering on this earthly stage,
Creep, and halt with steps uneven,
To the period of an age.

Wherefore live they but to see
Cunning, arrogance, and force,
Sights lamented much by thee,
Holding their accustomed course!

Oft was seen, in ages past,
All that we with wonder view;
Often shall be to the last;
Earth produces nothing new.

Thee we gratulate; content,
Should propitious Heaven design
Life for us, has calmly spent,
Though but half the length of thine.

XIV. THE CAUSE WON.

Two neighbours furiously dispute:
A field—the subject of the suit.
Trivial the spot, yet such the rage
With which the combatants engage,
'Twere hard to tell, who covets most
The prize—at whatsoever cost.
The pleadings swell. Words still suffice;
No single word but has its price:
No term but yields some fair pretence
For novel and increased expense.

Defendant thus becomes a name,
Which he that bore it, may disclaim;
Since both, in one description blended,
Are plaintiffs—when the suit is ended.

XV. THE SILKWORM.

The beams of April, ere it goes,
A worm scarce visible, disclose;
All winter long content to dwell
The tenant of his native shell.

The same prolific season gives
The sustenance by which he lives,
The mulberry leaf, a simple store,
That serves him—till he needs no more;
For, his dimensions once complete,
Thenceforth none ever sees him eat;
Though, till his growing time be past,
Scarce ever is he seen to fast.
That hour arrived, his work begins,
He spins and weaves, and weaves and spins,
Till circle upon circle wound
Careless around him and around,
Conceals him with a veil, though slight,
Impervious to the keenest sight.
Thus self-enclosed, as in a cask,
At length he finishes his task:
And, though a worm, when he was lost,
Or caterpillar at the most,
When next we see him wings he wears,
And in papilio-pomp appears;
Becomes oviparous, supplies
With future worms and future flies
The next ensuing year; and dies!
Well were it for the world, if all,
Who creep about this earthly ball,
Though shorter-lived than most he be,
Were useful in their kind as he.

XVI. THE INNOCENT THIEF.

Not a flower can be found in the fields,
Or the spot that we till for our pleasure,
From the largest to least, but it yields
To the bee, never-wearied, a treasure.

Scarce any she quits unexplored,
With a diligence truly exact;
Yet, steal what she may for her hoard,
Leaves evidence none of the fact.

Her lucrative task she pursues,
And pilfers with so much address,
That none of their odour they lose,
Nor charm by their beauty the less.

Not thus inoffensively preys
The canker-worm, indwelling foe!
His voracity not thus allays
The sparrow, the finch, or the crow.

The worm, more expensively fed,
The pride of the garden devours;
And birds pick the seed from the bed,
Still less to be spared than the flowers.

But she with such delicate skill
Her pillage so fits for her use,
That the chymist in vain with his still
Would labour the like to produce.

Then grudge not her temperate meals,
Nor a benefit blame as a theft;
Since, stole she not all that she steals,
Neither honey nor wax would be left.

XVII. DENNER'S OLD WOMAN.

In this mimic form of a matron in years,
How plainly the pencil of Denner appears!
The matron herself, in whose old age we see
Not a trace of decline, what a wonder is she!
No dimness of eye, and no cheek hanging low,
No wrinkle, or deep-furrowed frown on the brow!
Her forehead indeed is here circled around
With locks like the ribbon, with which they are bound;
While glossy and smooth, and as soft as the skin
Of a delicate peach, is the down of her chin;
But nothing unpleasant, or sad, or severe,
Or that indicates life in its winter—is here.
Yet all is expressed, with fidelity due,
Nor a pimple, or freckle, concealed from the view.

Many fond of new sights, or who cherish a taste
For the labours of art, to the spectacle haste:
The youths all agree, that could old age inspire
The passion of love, hers would kindle the fire,
And the matrons, with pleasure, confess that they see
Ridiculous nothing or hideous in thee.
The nymphs for themselves scarcely hope a decline,
O wonderful woman! as placid as thine.

Strange magic of art! which the youth can engage
To peruse, half-enamoured, the features of age;
And force from the virgin a sigh of despair,
That she when as old, shall be equally fair!
How great is the glory, that Denner has gained,
Since Apelles not more for his Venus obtained!

XVIII. THE TEARS OF A PAINTER.

Apelles, hearing that his boy
Had just expired—his only joy!
Although the sight with anguish tore him,
Bade place his dear remains before him.
He seized his brush, his colours spread;
And—"Oh! my child, accept,"—he said,
"('Tis all that I can now bestow,)
This tribute of a father's wo!"
Then, faithful to the twofold part,
Both of his feelings and his art,
He closed his eyes, with tender care,
And formed at once a fellow pair.
His brow, with amber locks beset,
And lips he drew, not livid yet;
And shaded all, that he had done,
To a just image of his son.

Thus far is well. But view again,
The cause of thy paternal pain?
Thy melancholy task fulfil!
It needs the last, last touches still.
Again his pencil's power he tries,
For on his lips a smile he spies:
And still his cheek, unfaded, shows
The deepest damask of the rose.
Then, heedless to the finished whole,
With fondest eagerness he stole,
Till scarce himself distinctly knew
The cherub copied from the true.

Now, painter, cease! thy task is done,
Long lives this image of thy son;
Nor short-lived shall the glory prove,
Or of thy labour, or thy love.

XIX. THE MAZE.

From right to left, and to and fro
Caught in a labyrinth, you go,
And turn, and turn, and turn again,
To solve the mystery, but in vain;
Stand still and breathe, and take from me
A clew that soon shall set you free!
Not Ariadne, if you meet her,
Herself could serve you with a better.
You enter'd easily—find where—
And make, with ease, your exit there!

XX. NO SORROW PECULIAR TO THE SUFFERER.

The lover, in melodious verses
His singular distress rehearses.
Still closing with a rueful cry,
"Was ever such a wretch as I!"
Yes! thousands have endured before
All thy distress; some, haply, more.
Unnumbered Corydons complain,
And Strephons, of the like disdain;
And if thy Chloe be of steel,
Too deaf to hear, too hard to feel;
Not her alone that censure fits,
Nor thou alone hast lost thy wits.

XXI. THE SNAIL.

To grass, or leaf, or fruit, or wall,
The snail sticks close, nor fears to fall,
As if he grew there, house and all
Together.

Within that house secure he hides,
When danger imminent betides
Of storm, or other harm besides
Of weather.

Give but his horns tho slightest touch,
His self-collecting power is such,
He shrinks into his house with much
Displeasure.

Wherever he dwells, he dwells alone,
Except himself has chattels none,
Well satisfied to be his own
Whole treasure.

Thus, hermit-like, his life he leads,
Nor partner of his banquet needs,
And if he meets one, only feeds
The faster.

Who seeks him must be worse than blind,
(He and his house are so combined)
If, finding it, he fails to find
Its master.

THE CONTRITE HEART.

The Lord will happiness divine
On contrite hearts bestow;
Then tell me, gracious God, is mine
A contrite heart or no?

I hear, but seem to hear in vain,
Insensible as steel;
If aught is felt, 'tis only pain
To find I can not feel.

I sometimes think myself inclined
To love thee, if I could;
But often feel another mind,
Averse to all that's good.

My best desires are faint and few,
I fain would strive for more;
But when I cry, "My strength renew,"
Seem weaker than before.

I see thy saints with comfort filled,
When in thy house of prayer;
But still in bondage I am held,
And find no comfort there.

Oh, make this heart rejoice or ache;
Decide this doubt for me;
And if it be not broken, break,
And heal it if it be.

THE SHINING LIGHT.

My former hopes are dead;
My terror now begins;
I feel, alas! that I am dead
In trespasses and sins.

Ah, whither shall I fly?
I hear the thunder roar;
The law proclaims destruction nigh,
And vengeance at the door.

When I review my ways,
I dread impending doom;
But sure a friendly whisper says,
"Flee from the wrath to come."

I see, or think I see,
A glimmering from afar;
A beam of day that shines for me,
To save me from despair.

Forerunner of the sun,
It marks the pilgrim's way;
I'll gaze upon it while I run,
And watch the rising day.

THIRSTING FOR GOD.

I thirst, but not as once I did,
The vain delights of earth to share;
Thy words, Immanuel, all forbid
That I should seek my pleasure there.

It was the sight of thy dear cross
First weaned my soul from earthly things,
And taught me to esteem as dross
The mirth of fools and pomp of kings.

I want that grace that springs from thee,
That quickens all things where it flows,
And makes a wretched thorn like me,
Bloom as the myrtle or the rose.

Dear fountain of delight unknown,
No longer sink below the brim:
But overflow and pour me down
A living and life-giving stream.

For sure, of all the plants that share
The notice of thy Father's eye,
None proves less grateful to his care,
Or yields him meaner fruit than I.

A TALE.*

In Scotland's realm where trees are few,
Nor even shrubs abound;
But where, however bleak the view,
Some better things are found.

* This tale is founded on an an article of intelligence which the author found in the Buckinghamshire Herald for Saturday, June 1, 1793, in the following words:—

Glasgow, May 23.

In a block, or pulley, near the head of the mast of a gabert now lying at the Broomielaw, there is a chaffinch's nest and four eggs. The nest was built while the vessel lay at Greenock,

For husband there and wife may boast
Their union undefiled,
And false ones are as rare almost
As hedge-rows in the wild.

In Scotland's realm, forlorn and bare,
The history chanced of late—
The history of a wedded pair,
A chaffinch and his mate.

The spring drew near, each felt a breast
With genial instinct filled;
They paired, and would have built a nest,
But found not where to build.

The heath uncovered, and the moors,
Except with snow and sleet,
Sea-beaten rocks, and naked shores
Could yield them no retreat

Long time a breeding-place they sought,
Till both grew vexed and tired;
At length a ship arriving, brought
The good so long desired.

A ship!—could such a restless thing
Afford them place of rest?
Or was the merchant charged to bring
The homeless birds a nest?

Hush—Silent hearers profit most—
This racer of the sea
Proved kinder to them than the coast
It served them with a tree.

But such a tree! 'twas shaven deal,
The tree they call a mast,
And had a hollow with a wheel
Through which the tackle passed.

Within that cavity aloft,
Their roofless home they fixed,
Formed with materials neat and soft,
Bents, wool, and feathers mixt.

Four ivory eggs soon pave its floor,
With russet specks bedight—
The vessel weighs, forsakes the shore,
And lessens to the sight.

The mother-bird is gone to sea,
As she had changed her kind;
But goes the male? Far wiser, he
Is doubtless left behind?

No—soon as from ashore he saw
The winged mansion move,
He flew to reach it, by a law
Of never-failing love.

Then perching at his consort's side,
Was briskly borne along,
The billows and the blast defied,
And cheered her with a song:

The seaman with sincere delight
His feathered shipmates eyes,
Scarce less exulting in the sight
Then when he tows a prize.

For seamen much believe in signs,
And for a chance so new,
Each some approaching good divines,
And may his hopes be true!

Hail, honoured land! a desert where
Not even birds can hide,
Yet parent of this loving pair
Whom nothing could divide.

And ye who, rather than resign
Your matrimonial plan,
Were not afraid to plough the brine
In company with man.

For whose lean country much disdain
We English often show,
Yet from a richer nothing gain
But wantonness and wo.

Be it your fortune, year by year,
The same resource to prove,
And may ye, sometimes landing here,
Instruct us how to love!

and was followed hither by both birds. Though the block is occasionally lowered for the inspection of the curious, the birds have not forsaken the nest. The cock, however, visits the nest but seldom, while the hen never leaves it but when she descends to the hull for food.

SONG ON PEACE.

Air—"My fond shepherds of late," &c.

No longer I follow a sound;
No longer a dream I pursue;
O Happiness! not to be found,
Unattainable treasure, adieu!

I have sought thee in splendour and dress,
In the regions of pleasure and taste;
I have sought thee, and seem'd to possess,
But have proved thee a vision at last.

An humble ambition and hope
The voice of true Wisdom inspires;
'Tis sufficient, if Peace be the scope
And the summit of all our desires.

Peace may be the lot of the mind
That seeks it in meekness and love;
But rapture and bliss are confined
To the glorified spirits above.

SONNET TO JOHN JOHNSON,

ON HIS PRESENTING ME WITH AN ANTIQUE BUST OF HOMER, 1793.

KINSMAN beloved, and as a son, by me!
When I behold this fruit of thy regard,
The sculptured form of my old favourite bard,
I reverence feel for him, and love for thee.
Joy too and grief. Much joy that there should be
Wise men and learn'd, who grudge not to reward
With some applause my bold attempt and hard,
Which others scorn: critics by courtesy.
The grief is this, that sunk in Homer's mine,
I lose my precious years now soon to fail,
Handling his gold, which howsoe'er it shine,
Proves dross, when balanced in the Christian scale.
Be wiser thou—like our forefather DONNE,
Seek heavenly wealth, and work for God alone.

INSCRIPTION FOR A STONE

ERECTED AT THE SOWING OF A GROVE OF OAKS AT CHILLINGTON, THE SEAT OF T. GIFFORD, ESQ. 1790.

OTHER stones the era tell,
When some feeble mortal fell;
I stand here to date the birth
Of these hardy sons of earth.

Which shall longest brave the sky,
Storm and frost—these oaks or I?
Pass an age or two away,
I must moulder and decay;
But the years that crumble me
Shall invigorate the tree,
Spread its branch, dilate its size,
Lift its summit to the skies.

Cherish honour, virtue, truth,
So shalt thou prolong thy youth.
Wanting these, however fast
Man be fix'd, and form'd to last,
He is lifeless even now,
Stone at heart, and can not grow.

LOVE ABUSED.

WHAT is there in the vale of life
Half so delightful as a wife,
When friendship, love, and peace combine
To stamp the marriage-bond divine?
The stream of pure and genuine love
Derives its current from above;
And earth a second Eden shows
Where'er the healing water flows:
But ah! if from the dykes and drains
Of sensual nature's feverish veins,
Lust, like a lawless headstrong flood,
Impregnated with ooze and mud,
Descending fast on every side,
Once mingles with the sacred tide,
Farewell the soul-enlivening scene!
The banks that wore a smiling green,
With rank defilement overspread,
Bewail their flowery beauties dead.
The stream polluted, dark, and dull,
Diffused into a Stygian pool,
Through life's last melancholy years
Is fed with ever-flowing tears:
Complaints supply the zephyr's part,
And sighs that heave a breaking heart.

LINES

COMPOSED FOR A MEMORIAL OF ASHLEY COWPER, ESQ. IMMEDIATELY AFTER HIS DEATH, BY HIS NEPHEW WILLIAM, OF WESTON. JUNE, 1788.

FAREWELL! endued with all that could engage
All hearts to love thee, both in youth and age!
In prime of life, for sprightliness enroll'd
Among the gay, yet virtuous as the old;

In life's last stage, (O blessings rarely found!)
Pleasant as youth with all its blossoms crown'd;
Through every period of this changeful state
Unchanged thyself—wise, good, affectionate!

Marble may flatter; and lest this should seem
O'ercharged with praises on so dear a theme,
Although thy worth be more than half suppress'd,
Love *shall* be satisfied, and veil the rest.

TO THE MEMORY OF THE LATE JOHN THORNTON, ESQ. 1790.

POETS attempt the noblest task they can,
Praising the Author of all good in man;
And, next, commemorating worthies lost,
The dead in whom that good abounded most.

Thee, therefore, of commercial fame, but more
Famed for thy probity from shore to shore.
Thee, Thornton! worthy in some page to shine,
As honest and more eloquent than mine,
I mourn; or, since thrice happy thou must be,
The world, no longer thy abode, not thee.
Thee to deplore, were grief misspent indeed;
It were to weep that goodness has its meed,
That there is bliss prepared in yonder sky,
And glory for the virtuous when they die.

What pleasure can the miser's fondled hoard,
Or spendthrift's prodigal excess afford,
Sweet as the privilege of healing wo
By virtue suffer'd combatting below?
That privilege was thine; Heaven gave thee means
To illumine with delight the saddest scenes,
Till thy appearance chased the gloom, forlorn
As midnight, and despairing of a morn.
Thou hadst an industry in doing good,
Restless as his who toils and sweats for food;
Avarice, in thee, was the desire of wealth
By rust unperishable or by stealth;
And if the genuine worth of gold depend
On application to its noblest end,
Thine had a value in the scales of Heaven,
Surpassing all that mine or mint had given.
And, though God made thee of a nature prone
To distribution boundless of thy own,
And still by motives of religious force
Impell'd thee more to that heroic course;
Yet was thy liberality discreet,
Nice in its choice, and of a temper'd heat,
And, though in act unwearied, secret still,
As in some solitude the summer rill
Refreshes, where it winds, the faded green,
And cheers the drooping flowers, unheard, unseen.
Such was thy charity; no sudden start,
After long sleep, of passion in the heart,
But steadfast principle, and, in its kind,
Of close relation to th' Eternal mind,
Traced easily to its true source above,
To Him, whose works bespeak his nature, love.
Thy bounties all were Christian, and I make
This record of thee for the Gospel's sake;
That the incredulous themselves may see
Its use and power exemplified in thee.

TO A YOUNG FRIEND,

ON HIS ARRIVING AT CAMBRIDGE WET, WHEN NO RAIN HAD FALLEN THERE,—1793.

If Gideon's fleece, which drench'd with dew he found,
While moisture none refresh'd the herbs around,
Might fitly represent the Church, endow'd
With heavenly gifts, to Heathens not allow'd;
In pledge, perhaps, of favours from on high,
Thy locks were wet when others' locks were dry.
Heaven grant us half the omen—may we see
Not drought on others, but much dew on thee!

TO THE MEMORY OF DR. LLOYD.

Our good old friend is gone, gone to his rest,
Whose social converse was itself a feast.
O ye of riper age, who recollect
How once ye loved, and eyed him with respect,
Both in the firmness of his better day,
While yet he ruled you with a father's sway,
And when impair'd by time and glad to rest,
Yet still with looks, in mild complaisance drest,
He took his annual seat, and mingled here
His sprightly vein with yours—now drop a tear.
In morals blameless as in manners meek,
He knew no wish that he might blush to speak;
But, happy in whatever state below,
And richer than the rich in being so,
Obtain'd the hearts of all, and such a meed
At length from One,* as made him rich indeed.
Hence then, ye titles, hence, not wanted here,
Go, garnish merit in a brighter sphere,
The brows of those whose more exalted lot
He could congratulate, but envied not.

Light lie the turf, good Senior! on thy breast,
And tranquil as thy mind was, be thy rest!
Though, living, thou hadst more desert than fame,
And not a stone now chronicles thy name.

ON FOP,

A DOG BELONGING TO LADY THROCKMORTON. AUGUST, 1792.

Though once a puppy, and though Fop by name,
Here moulders One whose bones some honour claim.
No sycophant, although of spaniel race,
And though no hound, a martyr to the chase—
Ye squirrels, rabbits, leverets, rejoice,
Your haunts no longer echo to his voice;
This record of his fate exulting view,
He died worn out with vain pursuit of you.

'Yes,' the indignant shade of Fop replies—
'And worn with vain pursuit man also dies.'

* He was usher and under-master of Westminster near fifty years, and retired from his occupation when he was near seventy, with a handsome pension from the king.

THE

LETTERS

OF

WILLIAM COWPER, ESQ.

TO HIS FRIENDS.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Temple, Aug. 9, 1763.

MY DEAR COUSIN,

HAVING promised to write to you, I make haste to be as good as my word. I have a pleasure in writing to you at any time, but especially at the present, when my days are spent in reading the Journals, and my nights in dreaming of them;* an employment not very agreeable to a head that has long been habituated to the luxury of choosing its subject, and has been as little employed upon business as if it had grown upon the shoulders of a much wealthier gentleman. But the numskull pays for it now, and will not presently forget the discipline it has undergone lately. If I succeed in this doubtful piece of promotion, I shall have at least this satisfaction to reflect upon, that the volumes I write will be treasured up with the utmost care for ages, and will last as long as the English constitution: a duration which ought to satisfy the vanity of any author who has a spark of love for his country. O! my good cousin! if I was to open my heart to you, I could show you strange sights; nothing, I flatter myself, that would shock you, but a great deal that would make you wonder. I am of a very singular temper, and very unlike all the men that I have ever conversed with. Certainly I am not an absolute fool; but I have more weaknesses than the greatest of all the fools I can recollect at present. In short, if I was as fit for the next world as I am unfit for this, and God forbid I should speak it in vanity, I would not change conditions with any saint in Christendom.

My destination is settled at last, and I have obtained a furlough. Margate is the word, and what do you think will ensue, cousin? I know what you expect, but ever since I was born I have been good at disappointing the most natural expectations. Many years ago, cousin, there was a possibility I might prove a very different thing from what I am at present. My character is now fixed, and riveted fast upon me; and, between friends, is not a very splendid one, or likely to be guilty of much fascination.

Adieu, my dear cousin! So much as I love you, I wonder how the deuce it has happened I was never in love with you. Thank heaven that I never was, for at this time I have had a pleasure in writing to you which in that case I should have forfeited. Let me hear from you, or I shall reap but half the reward that is due to my noble indifference.

Yours ever, and evermore, W. C.

* The writer had been recently appointed Clerk of the Journals in the House of Lords.

TO JOSEPH HILL, Esq.

DEAR JOE, *Huntingdon, June* 24, 1765.

THE only recompense I can make you for your kind attention to my affairs during my illness, is to tell you, that by the mercy of God I am restored to perfect health both of mind and body. This I believe will give you pleasure, and I would gladly do any thing from which you could receive it.

I left St. Alban's on the seventeenth, and arrived that day at Cambridge, spent some time there with my brother, and came hither on the twenty-second. I have a lodging that puts me continually in mind of our summer excursions; we have had many worse, and except the size of it (which however is sufficient for a single man) but few better. I am not quite alone, having brought a servant with me from St. Alban's, who is the very mirror of fidelity and affection for his master. And whereas the Turkish Spy says, he kept no ser-

vant, because he would not have an enemy in his house, I hired mine, because I would have a friend. Men do not usually bestow these encomiums on their lackeys, nor do they usually deserve them; but I have had experience of mine, both in sickness and in health, and never saw his fellow.

The river Ouse, I forget how they spell it, is the most agreeable circumstance in this part of the world; at this town it is I believe as wide as the Thames at Windsor; nor does the silver Thames better deserve that epithet, nor has it more flowers upon its banks, these being attributes which in strict truth belong to neither. Fluellin would say, they are as like as my fingers to my fingers, and there is salmon in both. It is a noble stream to bathe in, and I shall make that use of it three times a week, having introduced myself to it for the first time this morning.

I beg you will remember me to all my friends, which is a task will cost you no great pains to execute—particularly remember me to those of your own house, and believe me

Your very affectionate, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Huntingdon, July 1, 1765.

MY DEAR LADY HESKETH,

Since the visit you were so kind as to pay me in the Temple (the only time I ever saw you without pleasure,) what have I not suffered! And since it has pleased God to restore me to the use of my reason, what have I not enjoyed! You know, by experience, how pleasant it is to feel the first approaches of health after a fever; but, Oh the fever of the brain! To feel the quenching of that fire is indeed a blessing which I think it impossible to receive without the most consummate gratitude. Terrible as this chastisement is, I acknowledge in it the hand of an infinite justice; nor is it at all more difficult for me to perceive in it the hand of an infinite mercy likewise: when I consider the effect it has had upon me, I am exceedingly thankful for it, and, without hypocrisy, esteem it the greatest blessing, next to life itself, I ever received from the divine bounty. I pray God that I may ever retain this sense of it, and then I am sure I shall continue to be, as I am at present, really happy.

I write thus to you that you may not think me a forlorn and wretched creature; which you might be apt to do considering my very distant removal from every friend I have in the world—a circumstance which, before this event befel me, would undoubtedly have made me so; but my affliction has taught me a road to happiness which without it I should never have found; and I know, and have experience of it every day, that the mercy of God, to him who believes himself the object of it, is more than sufficient to compensate for the loss of every other blessing.

You may now inform all those whom you think really interested in my welfare, that they have no need to be apprehensive on the score of my happiness at present. And you yourself will believe that my happiness is no dream, because I have told you the foundation on which it is built. What I have written would appear like enthusiasm to many, for we are apt to give that name to every warm affection of the mind in others which we have not experienced in ourselves; but to you, who have so much to be thankful for, and a temper inclined to gratitude, it will not appear so.

I beg you will give my love to Sir Thomas, and believe that I am obliged to you both for inquiring after me at St. Alban's.

Yours ever, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Huntingdon, July 4, 1765.

Being just emerged from the Ouse, I sit down to thank you, my dear cousin, for your friendly and comfortable letter. What could you think of my unaccountable behaviour to you in that visit I mentioned in my last? I remember I neither spoke to you, nor looked at you. The solution of the mystery indeed followed soon after, but at the time it must have been inexplicable. The uproar within was even then begun, and my silence was only the sulkiness of a thunderstorm before it opens. I am glad, however, that the only instance in which I knew not how to value your company was, when I was not in my senses. It was the first of the kind, and I trust in God it will be the last.

How naturally does affliction make us Christians! and how impossible is it when all human help is vain and the whole earth too poor and trifling to furnish us with one moment's peace, how impossible is it then to avoid looking at the gospel! It gives me some concern, though at the same time it increases my gratitude, to reflect that a convert made in Bedlam is more likely to be a stumbling block to others, than to advance their faith. But if it has that effect upon any, it is owing to their reasoning amiss, and drawing their conclusions from false premises. He who can ascribe an amendment of life and manners, and a reformation of the heart itself, to madness, is guilty of an absurdity that in any other case would fasten the imputation of madness upon himself; for by so doing he ascribes a reasonable effect to an unreasonable cause, and a positive effect to a negative. But when Christianity only is to be sacrificed, he that stabs deepest is always the wisest man. You, my dear cousin, yourself will be apt to think I carry the matter too far, and that in the present warmth of

my heart I make too ample a concession in saying that I am *only now* a convert. You think I always believed, and I thought so too; but you were deceived, and so was I. I called myself indeed a Christian, but He who knows my heart knows that I never did a right thing, nor abstained from a wrong one, because I was so. But if I did either, it was under the influence of some other motive. And it is such seeming Christians, such pretending believers, that do most mischief to the cause, and furnish the strongest arguments to support the infidelity of their enemies: unless profession and conduct go together, the man's life is a lie, and the validity of what he professes itself is called in question. The difference between a Christian and an Unbeliever would be so striking, if the treacherous allies of the church would go over at once to the other side, that I am satisfied religion would be no loser by the bargain.

I reckon it one instance of the providence that has attended me throughout this whole event, that instead of being delivered into the hands of one of the London physicians, who were so much nearer that I wonder I was not, I was carried to Doctor Cotton. I was not only treated by him with the greatest tenderness while I was ill, and attended with the utmost diligence, but when my reason was restored to me, and I had so much need of a religious friend to converse with, to whom I could open my mind upon the subject without reserve, I could hardly have found a fitter person for the purpose. My eagerness and anxiety to settle my opinions upon that long neglected point made it necessary that, while my mind was yet weak, and my spirits uncertain, I should have some assistance. The doctor was as ready to administer relief to me in this article likewise, and as well qualified to do it, as in that which was more immediately his province. How many physicians would have thought this an irregular appetite, and a symptom of remaining madness! But if it were so, my friend was as mad as myself, and it is well for me that he was so.

My dear cousin, you know not half the deliverances I have received; my brother is the only one in the family who does. My recovery is indeed a signal one, but a greater if possible went before it. My future life must express my thankfulness, for by words I can not do it.

I pray God to bless you and my friend sir Thomas. Yours ever, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Huntingdon, July 5, 1765.

MY DEAR LADY HESKETH,

My pen runs so fast you will begin to wish you had not put it in motion, but you must consider we have not met even by letter almost these two years, which will account in some measure for my pestering you in this manner; besides, my last was no answer to yours, and therefore I consider myself as still in your debt. To say truth, I have this long time promised myself a correspondence with you as one of my principal pleasures.

I should have written to you from St. Alban's long since, but was willing to perform quarantine first, both for my own sake and because I thought my letters would be more satisfactory to you from any other quarter. You will perceive I allowed myself a very sufficient time for the purpose, for I date my recovery from the twenty-fifth of last July, having been ill seven months, and well twelve months. It was on that day my brother came to see me. I was far from well when he came in; yet though he only staid one day with me, his company served to put to flight a thousand deliriums and delusions which I sill laboured under, and the next morning I found myself a new creature. But to the present purpose.

As far as I am acquainted with this place, I like it extremely. Mr. Hodgson, the minister of the parish, made me a visit the day before yesterday. He is very sensible, a good preacher, and conscientious in the discharge of his duty. He is very well known to Doctor Newton, Bishop of Bristol, the author of the treatise on the Prophecies, one of our best bishops, and who has written the most demonstrative proof of the truth of Christianity, in my mind, that ever was published.

There is a village called Hertford, about a mile and a half from hence. The church there is very prettily situated upon a rising ground, so close to the river that it washes the wall of the churchyard. I found an epitaph there, the other morning, the two first lines of which being better than any thing else I saw there I made shift to remember. It is by a widow on her husband.

> "Thou wast too good to live on earth with me,
> And I not good enough to die with thee."

The distance of this place from Cambridge is the worst circumstance belonging to it. My brother and I are fifteen miles asunder, which, considering that I came hither for the sake of being near him, is rather too much. I wish that young man was better known in the family. He has as many good qualities as his nearest kindred could wish to find in him.

As Mr. Quin very roundly expressed himself upon some such occasion, 'here is very plentiful accommodation, and great happiness of provision.' So that if I starve, it must be through forgetfulness, rather than scarcity.

Fare thee well, my good and dear cousin.

Ever yours, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

MY DEAR COUSIN, *July* 12, 1776.

You are very good to me, and if you will only continue to write at such intervals as you find convenient, I shall receive all that pleasure which I proposed to myself from our correspondence. I desire no more than that you would never drop me for any great length of time together, for I shall then think you only write because something happened to put you in mind of me, or for some other reason equally mortifying. I am not however so unreasonable as to expect you should perform this act of friendship so frequently as myself, for you live in a world swarming with engagements, and my hours are almost all my own. You must every day be employed in doing what is expected from you by a thousand others, and I have nothing to do but what is most agreeable to myself.

Our mentioning Newton's treatise on the Prophecies brings to my mind an anecdote of Dr. Young, who, you know, died lately at Welwyn. Dr. Cotton, who was intimate with him, paid him a visit about a fortnight before he was seized with his last illness. The old man was then in perfect health; the antiquity of his person, the gravity of utterance, and the earnestness with which he discoursed about religion, gave him, in the doctor's eye, the appearance of a prophet. They had been delivering their sentiments upon this book of Newton, when Young closed the conference thus:—'My friend, there are two considerations upon which my faith in Christ is built upon a rock: the fall of man, the redemption of man, and the resurrection of man, the three cardinal articles of our religion, are such as human ingenuity could never have invented, therefore they must be divine.—The other argument is this—If the Prophecies have been fulfilled (of which there is abundant demonstration) the scripture must be the word of God; and if the scripture is the word of God, christianity must be true.'

This treatise on the prophecies serves a double purpose; it not only proves the truth of religion, in a manner that never has been nor ever can be controverted, but it proves likewise, that the Roman catholic is the apostate and antichristian church, so frequently foretold both in the old and new testaments. Indeed, so fatally connected is the refutation of popery with the truth of christianity, when the latter is evinced by the completion of the prophecies, that in proportion as light is thrown upon the one, the deformities and errors of the other are more plainly exhibited. But I leave you to the book itself; there are parts of it which may possibly afford you less entertainment than the rest, because you have never been a school-boy; but in the main it is so interesting, and you are so fond of that which is so, that I am sure you will like it.

My dear cousin, how happy am I in having a friend to whom I can open my heart upon these subjects! I have many intimates in the world, and have had many more than I shall have hereafter, to whom a long letter on these most important articles would appear tiresome, at least, if not impertinent. But I am not afraid of meeting with that reception from you, who have never yet made it your interest that there should be no truth in the word of God. May this everlasting truth be your comfort while you live, and attend you with peace and joy in your last moments! I love you too well not to make this a part of my prayers, and when I remember my friends on these occasions, there is no likelihood that you can be forgotten.

Yours ever, W. C.

P. S. Cambridge.—I add this postscript at my brother's rooms. He desires to be affectionately remembered to you, and if you are in town about a fortnight hence, when he proposes to be there himself, will take a breakfast with you.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Huntingdon, August 1, 1765.

MY DEAR COUSIN,

If I was to measure your obligation to write by my own desire to hear from you, I should call you an idle correspondent if a post went by without bringing me a letter, but I am not so unreasonable; on the contrary, I think myself very happy in hearing from you upon your own terms, as you find most convenient. Your short history of my family is a very acceptable part of your letter; if they really interest themselves in my welfare, it is a mark of their great charity for one who has been a disappointment and a vexation to them ever since he has been of consequence to be either. My friend, the major's behaviour to me, after all he suffered by my abandoning his interest and my own in so miserable a manner, is a noble instance of generosity, and true greatness of mind; and indeed I know no man in whom those qualities are more conspicuous; one need only furnish him with an opportunity to display them, and they are always ready to show themselves in his words and actions, and even in his countenance at a moment's warning. I have great reason to be thankful—I have lost none of my acquaintance but those whom I determined not to keep. I am sorry this class is so numerous. What would I not give, that every friend I have in the world were not almost but altogether christians! My dear cousin, I am half afraid to talk in this style, lest I should seem to indulge a censorious humour, instead of hoping, as

I ought, the best for all men. But what can be said against ocular proof? and what is hope when it is built upon presumption? To use the most holy name in the universe for no purpose, or a bad one, contrary to his own express commandment: to pass the day, and the succeeding days, weeks, and months, and years, without one act of private devotion, one confession of our sins, or one thanksgiving for the numberless blessings we enjoy; to hear the word of God in public with a distracted attention, or with none at all; to absent ourselves voluntarily from the blessed communion, and to live in the total neglect of it, though our Saviour has charged it upon us with an express injunction, are the common and ordinary liberties which the generality of professors allow themselves: and what is this but to live without God in the world! Many causes may be assigned for this antichristian spirit, so prevalent among Christians; but one of the principal I take to be their utter forgetfulness that they have the word of God in their possession.

My friend sir William Russell was distantly related to a very accomplished man, who, though he never believed the gospel, admired the scriptures as the sublimest compositions in the world, and read them often. I have been intimate myself with a man of fine taste, who has confessed to me that, though he could not subscribe to the truth of christianity itself, yet he never could read St. Luke's account of our Saviour's appearance to the two disciples going to Emmaus, without being wonderfully affected by it; and he thought that if the stamp of divinity was any where to be found in scripture, it was strongly marked and visibly impressed upon that passage. If these men, whose hearts were chilled with the darkness of infidelity, could find such charms in the mere style of the scripture, what must they find there, whose eye penetrates deeper than the letter, and who firmly believe themselves interested in all the invaluable privileges of the gospel? 'He that believeth on me is passed from death unto life,' though it be as plain a sentence as words can form, has more beauties in it for such a person than all the labours antiquity can boast of. If my poor man of taste, whom I have just mentioned, had searched a little further, he might have found other parts of the sacred history as strongly marked with the characters of divinity as that he mentioned. The parable of the prodigal son, the most beautiful fiction that ever was invented; our Saviour's speech to his disciples, with which he closes his earthly ministration, full of the sublimest dignity and tenderest affection, surpass every thing that I ever read, and, like the spirit by which they were dictated, fly directly to the heart. If the scripture did not disdain all affectation of ornament, one should call these, and such as these, the ornamental parts of it; but the matter of it is that upon which it principally stakes its credit with us, and the style, however excellent and peculiar to itself, is only one of those many external evidences by which it recommends itself to our belief.

I shall be very much obliged to you for the book you mention; you could not have sent me any thing that would have been more welcome, unless you had sent me your own meditations instead of them.

Yours, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Huntingdon, August 17, 1765.

You told me, my dear cousin, that I need not fear writing too often, and you perceive I take you at your word. At present, however, I shall do little more than thank you for the Meditations, which I admire exceedingly: the author of them manifestly loved the truth with an undissembled affection, had made a great progress in the knowledge of it, and experienced all the happiness that naturally results from that noblest of attainments. There is one circumstance, which he gives us frequent occasion to observe in him, which I believe will ever be found in the philosophy of every true Christian. I mean the eminent rank which he assigns to faith among the virtues, as the source and parent of them all. There is nothing more infallibly true than this, and doubtless it is with a view to the purifying and sanctifying nature of a true faith, that our Saviour says, 'He that believeth in me hath everlasting life,' with many other expressions to the same purpose. Considered in this light, no wonder it has the power of salvation ascribed to it! Considered in any other, we must suppose it to operate like an oriental talisman, if it obtains for us the least advantage, which is an affront to him who insists upon our having it, and will on no other terms admit us to his favour. I mention this distinguishing article in his Reflections the rather, because it serves for a solid foundation to the distinction I made, in my last, between the specious professor and the true believer, between him whose faith is his Sunday-suit and him who never puts it off at all—a distinction I am a little fearful sometimes of making, because it is a heavy stroke upon the practice of more than half the Christians in the world.

My dear cousin, I told you I read the book with great pleasure, which may be accounted for from its own merit, but perhaps it pleased me the more because you had travelled the same road before me. You know there is such a pleasure as this, which would want great explanation to some folks, being perhaps a mystery to those whose hearts are a mere muscle, and serve only for the purposes of an even circulation.

W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Sept. 4, 1765.

Though I have some very agreeable acquaintance at Huntingdon, my dear cousin, none of their visits are so agreeable as the arrival of your letters. I thank you for that which I have just received from Droxford; and particularly for that part of it where you give me an unlimited liberty upon the subject I have already so often written upon. Whatever interests us deeply as naturally flows into the pen as it does from the lips, when every restraint is taken away, and we meet with a friend indulgent enough to attend to us. How many, in all that variety of characters with whom I am acquainted, could I find after the strictest search, to whom I could write as I do to you? I hope the number will increase. I am sure it can not easily be diminished. Poor ———! I have heard the whole of his history, and can only lament what I am sure I can make no apology for. Two of my friends have been cut off during my illness, in the midst of such a life as it is frightful to reflect upon; and here am I, in better health and spirits than I can almost remember to have enjoyed before, after having spent months in the apprehension of instant death. How mysterious are the ways of Providence! Why did I receive grace and mercy? Why was I preserved, afflicted for my good, received, as I trust, into favour, and blessed with the greatest happiness I can ever know or hope for in this life, while these were overtaken by the great arrest, unawakened, unrepenting, and every way unprepared for it? His infinite wisdom, to whose infinite mercy I owe it all, can solve these questions, and none beside him. If a free-thinker, as many a man miscalls himself, could be brought to give a serious answer to them, he would certainly say—'Without doubt, sir, you was in great danger, you had a narrow escape, a most fortunate one indeed.' How excessively foolish, as well as shocking! As if life depended upon luck, and all that we are or can be, all that we have or hope for, could possibly be referred to accident. Yet to this freedom of thought it is owing that he, who, as our Saviour tells us, is thoroughly apprized of the death of the meanest of his creatures, is supposed to leave those, whom he has made in his own image to the mercy of chance; and to this, therefore, it is likewise owing that the correction which our heavenly Father bestows upon us, that we may be fitted to receive his blessing, is so often disappointed of its benevolent intention, and that men despise the chastening of the Almighty. Fevers and all diseases are accidents; and long life, recovery at least from sickness, is the gift of the physician. No man can be a greater friend to the use of means upon these occasions than myself, for it were presumption and enthusiasm to neglect them. God has endued them with salutary properties on purpose that we might avail ourselves of them, otherwise that part of his creation were in vain. But to impute our recovery to the medicine, and to carry our views no further, is to rob God of his honour; and is saying in effect he has parted with the keys of life and death, and, by giving to a drug the power to heal us, has placed our lives out of his own reach. He that thinks thus may as well fall upon his knees at once, and return thanks to the medicine that cured him, for it was certainly more immediately instrumental in his recovery than either the apothecary or the doctor. My dear cousin, a firm persuasion of the superintendence of Providence over all our concerns is absolutely necessary to our happiness. Without it we can not be said to believe in the scripture, or practise any thing like resignation to his will. If I am convinced that no affliction can befal me without the permission of God, I am convinced likewise that he sees and knows that I am afflicted; believing this, I must in the same degree believe that, if I pray to him for deliverance, he hears me; I must needs know likewise with equal assurance that, if he hears, he will also deliver me, if that will upon the whole be most conducive to my happiness; and if he does not deliver me, I may be well assured that he has none but the most benevolent intention in declining it. He made us, not because we could add to his happiness, which was always perfect, but that we might be happy ourselves; and will he not in all his dispensations towards us, even in the minutest, consult that end for which he made us? To suppose the contrary, is (which we are not always aware of) affronting every one of his attributes; and at the same time the certain consequence of disbelieving his care for us is, that we renounce utterly our dependence upon him. In this view it will appear plainly that the line of duty is not stretched too tight, when we are told that we ought to accept every thing at his hands as a blessing, and to be thankful even while we smart under the rod of iron with which he sometimes rules us. Without this persuasion, every blessing, however we may think ourselves happy in it, loses its greatest recommendation, and every affliction is intolerable. Death itself must be welcome to him who has this faith, and he who has it not must aim at it, if he is not a madman. You can not think how glad I am to hear you are going to commence lady and mistress of Freemantle.* I know it well, and I could go from Southampton blindfold. You are kind to invite me to it, and I shall be so kind to myself as to accept the invitation, though I should not for a slight consideration be prevailed upon to quit my beloved retirement at Huntingdon.

Yours ever, W. C.

* Freemantle, a village near Southampton.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Huntingdon, Sept. 14, 1765.

MY DEAR COUSIN,

THE longer I live here, the better I like the place, and the people who belong to it. I am upon very good terms with no less than five families, besides two or three odd scrambling fellows like myself. The last acquaintance I made here is with the race of the Unwins, consisting of father and mother, son and daughter, the most comfortable, social folks you ever knew. The son is about twenty-one years of age, one of the most unreserved and amiable young men I ever conversed with. He is not yet arrived at that time of life, when suspicion recommends itself to us in the form of wisdom, and sets every thing but our own dear selves at an immeasurable distance from our esteem and confidence. Consequently he is known almost as soon as seen, and having nothing in his heart that makes it necessary for him to keep it barred and bolted, opens it to the perusal even of a stranger. The father is a clergyman, and the son is designed for orders. The design, however, is quite his own, proceeding merely from his being and having always been sincere in his belief and love of the gospel. Another acquaintance I have lately made is with a Mr. Nicholson, a North-country divine, very poor, but very good, and very happy. He reads prayers here twice a day, all the year round; and travels on foot to serve two churches every Sunday through the year, his journey out and home again being sixteen miles. I supped with him last night. He gave me bread and cheese, and a black jug of ale of his own brewing, and doubtless brewed by his own hands. Another of my acquaintance is Mr. ———, a thin, tall, old man, and as good as he is thin. He drinks nothing but water, and eats no flesh; partly (I believe) from a religious scruple (for he is very religious), and partly in the spirit of a valetudinarian. He is to be met with every morning of his life, at about six o'clock, at a fountain of very fine water, about a mile from the town, which is reckoned extremely like the Bristol spring. Being both early risers, and the only early walkers in the place, we soon became acquainted. His great piety can be equalled by nothing but his great regularity, for he is the most perfect time-piece in the world. I have received a visit likewise from Mr. ——. He is very much a gentleman, well-read, and sensible. I am persuaded, in short, that if I had the choice of all England, where to fix my abode, I could not have chosen better for myself, and most likely I should not have chosen so well.

You say, you hope it is not necessary for salvation, to undergo the same afflictions that I have undergone. No! my dear cousin. God deals with his children as a merciful father; he does not, as he himself tells us, afflict willingly the sons of men. Doubtless there are many, who, having been placed by his good providence out of the reach of any great evil and the influence of bad example, have from their very infancy been partakers of the grace of his holy spirit, in such a manner as never to have allowed themselves in any grievous offence against him. May you love him more and more day by day; as every day, while you think upon him, you will find him more worthy of your love: and may you be finally accepted with him for his sake, whose intercession for all his faithful servants can not but prevail! Yours ever, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Huntingdon, Oct. 10, 1765.

MY DEAR COUSIN,

I SHOULD grumble at your long silence, if I did not know that one may love one's friends very well, though one is not always in the humour to write to them. Besides, I have the satisfaction of being perfectly sure that you have at least twenty times recollected the debt you owe me, and as often resolved to pay it: and perhaps while you remain indebted to me, you think of me twice as often as you would do, if the account was clear. These are the reflections with which I comfort myself, under the affliction of not hearing from you; my temper does not incline me to jealousy, and if it did, I should set all right by having recourse to what I have already received from you.

I thank God for your friendship, and for every friend I have; for all the pleasing circumstances of my situation here, for my health of body, and perfect serenity of mind. To recollect the past, and compare it with the present, is all I have need of to fill me with gratitude: and to be grateful is to be happy. Not that I think myself sufficiently thankful, or that I shall ever be so in this life. The warmest heart perhaps only feels by fits, and is often as insensible as the coldest. This at least is frequently the case with mine, and oftener than it should be. But the mercy that can forgive iniquity will never be severe to mark our frailties; to that mercy, my dear cousin, I commend you, with earnest wishes for your welfare, and remain your ever affectionate W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Huntingdon, Oct. 18, 1765.

I WISH you joy, my dear cousin, of being safely arrived in port from the storms of Southampton. For my own part, who am but as a Thames wherry, in a world full of tempest and commotion, I know so well the value of the creek I have put into, and the snugness it affords me, that I have

a sensible sympathy with you in the pleasure you find in being once more blown to Droxford. I know enough of Miss Morley to send her my compliments; to which, if I had never seen her, her affection for you would sufficiently entitle her. If I neglected to do it sooner, it is only because I am naturally apt to neglect what I ought to do; and if I was as genteel as I am negligent, I should be the most delightful creature in the universe. I am glad you think so favourably of my Huntingdon acquaintance; they are indeed a nice set of folks, and suit me exactly. I should have been more particular in my account of Miss Unwin, if I had had materials for a minute description. She is about eighteen years of age, rather handsome and genteel. In her mother's company she says little; not because her mother requires it of her, but because she seems glad of that excuse for not talking, being somewhat inclined to bashfulness. There is the most remarkable cordiality between all the parts of the family; and the mother and daughter seem to doat upon each other. The first time I went to the house I was introduced to the daughter alone; and sat with her near half an hour, before her brother came in, who had appointed me to call upon him. Talking is necessary in a *tête-à-tête*, to distinguish the persons of the drama from the chairs they sit on: accordingly she talked a great deal, and extremely well; and, like the rest of the family, behaved with as much ease of address as if we had been old acquaintance. She resembles her mother in her great piety, who is one of the most remarkable instances of it I have ever seen. They are altogether the cheerfullest and most engaging family-piece it is possible to conceive.—Since I wrote the above, I met Mrs. Unwin in the street, and went home with her. She and I walked together near two hours in the garden, and had a conversation which did me more good than I should have received from an audience of the first prince in Europe. That woman is a blessing to me, and I never see her without being the better for her company. I am treated in the family as if I was a near relation, and have been repeatedly invited to call upon them at all times. You know what a shy fellow I am; I can not prevail with myself to make so much use of this privilege as I am sure they intend I should; but perhaps this awkwardness will wear off hereafter. It was my earnest request before I left St. Alban's, that wherever it might please Providence to dispose of me, I might meet with such an acquaintance as I find in Mrs. Unwin. How happy it is to believe, with a steadfast assurance, that our petitions are heard even while we are making them—and how delightful to meet with a proof of it in the effectual and actual grant of them! Surely it is a gracious finishing given to those means, which the Almighty has been pleased to make use of for my conversion. After having been deservedly rendered unfit for any society, to be again qualified for it, and admitted at once into the fellowship of those whom God regards as the excellent of the earth, and whom, in the emphatical language of Scripture, he preserves as the apple of his eye, is a blessing which carries with it the stamp and visible superscription of divine bounty—a grace unlimited as undeserved; and, like its glorious Author, free in its course, and blessed in its operation!

My dear cousin! Health and happiness, and above all, the favour of our great and gracious Lord, attend you! While we seek it in spirit and in truth, we are infinitely more secure of it than of the next breath we expect to draw. Heaven and earth have their destined periods; ten thousand worlds will vanish at the consummation of all things; but the word of God standeth fast; and they who trust in him shall never be confounded.

My love to all who enquire after me.

Yours affectionately, W. C.

TO MAJOR COWPER.

Huntingdon, Oct. 18, 1765.

MY DEAR MAJOR,

I have neither lost the use of my fingers nor my memory, though my unaccountable silence might incline you to suspect that I had lost both. The history of those things which have, from time to time, prevented my scribbling, would not only be insipid but extremely voluminous; for which reasons they will not make their appearance at present, nor probably at any time hereafter. If my neglecting to write to you were a proof that I had never thought of you, and that had been really the case, five shillings apiece would have been much too little to give for the sight of such a monster! but I am no such monster, nor do I perceive in myself the least tendency to such a transformation. You may recollect that I had but very uncomfortable expectations of the accommodation I should meet with at Huntingdon. How much better is it to take our lot, where it shall please Providence to cast it, without anxiety! Had I chosen for myself, it is impossible I could have fixed upon a place so agreeable to me in all respects. I so much dreaded the thought of having a new acquaintance to make, with no other recommendation than that of being a perfect stranger, that I heartily wished no creature here might take the least notice of me. Instead of which, in about two months after my arrival, I became known to all the visitable people here, and do verily think it the most agreeable neighbourhood I ever saw.

Here are three families who have received me with the utmost civility; and two in particular

have treated me with as much cordiality, as if their pedigrees and mine had grown upon the same sheep-skin. Besides these, there are three or four single men who suit my temper to a hair. The town is one of the neatest in England; the country is fine for several miles about it; and the roads, which are all turnpike, and strike out four or five different ways, are perfectly good all the year round. I mention this latter circumstance chiefly because my distance from Cambridge has made a horseman of me at last, or at least is likely to do so. My brother and I meet every week, by an alternate reciprocation of intercourse, as Sam Johnson would express it; sometimes I get a lift in a neighbour's chaise, but generally ride. As to my own personal condition, I am much happier than the day is long, and sunshine and candlelight see me perfectly contented. I get books in abundance, as much company as I choose, a deal of *comfortable leisure*, and enjoy better health, I think, than for many years past. What is there wanting to make me happy? Nothing, if I can but be as thankful as I ought; and I trust that He who has bestowed so many blessings upon me, will give me gratitude to crown them all. I beg you will give my love to my dear cousin Maria, and to every body at the Park. If Mrs. Maitland is with you, as I suspect by a passage in Lady Hesketh's letter to me, pray remember me to her very affectionately. And believe me, my dear friend, ever yours.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR JOE, *October* 25, 1765.

I am afraid the month of October has proved rather unfavourable to the belle assemblée at Southampton; high winds and continual rains being bitter enemies to that agreeable lounge, which you and I are equally fond of. I have very cordially betaken myself to my books, and my fireside; and seldom leave them unless for exercise. I have added another family to the number of those I was acquainted with when you were here. Their name is Unwin—the most agreeable people imaginable; quite sociable, and as free from the ceremonious civility of country gentlefolks as any I ever met with. They treat me more like a near relation than a stranger, and their house is always open to me. The old gentleman carries me to Cambridge in his chaise. He is a man of learning and good sense, and as simple as parson Adams. His wife has a very uncommon understanding, has read much to excellent purpose, and is more polite than a duchess. The son who belongs to Cambridge, is a most amiable young man, and the daughter quite of a piece with the rest of the family. They see but little company, which suits me exactly; go when I will, I find a house full of peace and cordiality in all its parts, and I am sure to hear no scandal, but such discourse instead of it as we are all better for. You remember Rousseau's description of an English morning; such are the mornings I spend with these good people; and the evenings differ from them in nothing, except that they are still more snug and quieter. Now I know them, I wonder that I liked Huntingdon so well before I knew them, and am apt to think I should find every place disagreeable that had not an Unwin belonging to it.

This incident convinces me of the truth of an observation I have often made, that when we circumscribe our estimate of all that is clever within the limits of our own acquaintance (which I at least have been always apt to do,) we are guilty of a very uncharitable censure upon the rest of the world, and of a narrowness of thinking disgraceful to ourselves. Wapping and Redriff may contain some of the most amiable persons living, and such as one would go to Wapping and Redriff to make acquaintance with. You remember Mr. Gray's stanza—

'Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The deep unfathom'd caves of ocean bear;
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen;
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.'

Yours, dear Joe, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Huntingdon, March 6, 1766.

MY DEAR COUSIN,

I have for some time past imputed your silence to the cause which you yourself assign for it, viz. to my change of situation: and was even sagacious enough to account for the frequency of your letters to me, while I lived alone, from your attention to me in a state of such solitude as seemed to make it an act of particular charity to write to me. I bless God for it, I was happy even then; solitude has nothing gloomy in it if the soul points upwards. St. Paul tells his Hebrew converts, 'ye are come (already come) to Mount Sion, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant.' When this is the case, as surely it was with them, or the Spirit of Truth had never spoken it, there is an end of the melancholy and dullness of a solitary life at once. You will not suspect me, my dear cousin, of a design to understand this passage literally. But this, however, it certainly means; that a lively faith is able to anticipate in some measure the joys of that heavenly society, which the soul shall actually possess hereafter.

Since I have changed my situation, I have found

still greater cause of thanksgiving to the Father of all mercies. The family with whom I live are Christians; and it has pleased the Almighty to bring me to the knowledge of them, that I may want no means of improvement in that temper and conduct which he is pleased to require in all his servants.

My dear cousin! one half of the christian world would call this madness, fanaticism, and folly: but are not all these things warranted by the word of God, not only in the passages I have cited, but in many others? If we have no communion with God here, surely we can expect none hereafter. A faith that does not place our conversation in heaven; that does not warm the heart, and purify it too; that does not, in short, govern our thought, word, and deed, is no faith, nor will it obtain for us any spiritual blessing here or hereafter. Let us see therefore, my dear cousin, that we do not deceive ourselves in a matter of such infinite moment. The world will be ever telling us that we are good enough; and the world will vilify us behind our backs. But it is not the world which tries the heart; that is the prerogative of God alone. My dear cousin! I have often prayed for you behind your back, and now I pray for you to your face. There are many who would not forgive me this wrong; but I have known you so long, and so well, that I am not afraid of telling you how sincerely I wish for your growth in every christian grace, in every thing that may promote and secure your everlasting welfare.

I am obliged to Mrs. Cowper for the book, which you perceive arrived safe. I am willing to consider it as an intimation on her part that she would wish me to write to her, and shall do it accordingly. My circumstances are rather particular, such as call upon my friends, those I mean who are truly such, to take some little notice of me; and will naturally make those who are not such in sincerity rather shy of doing it. To this I impute the silence of many with regard to me, who, before the affliction that befel me, were ready enough to converse with me.

Yours ever, W. C.

TO MRS. COWPER.

MY DEAR COUSIN,

I AM much obliged to you for Pearsall's Meditations, especially as it furnishes me with an occasion of writing to you, which is all I have waited for. My friends must excuse me, if I write to none but those who lay it fairly in my way to do so. The inference I am apt to draw from their silence is, that they wish me to be silent too.

I have great reason, my dear cousin, to be thankful to the gracious Providence that conducted me to this place. The lady in whose house I live is so excellent a person, and regards me with a friendship so truly christian, that I could almost fancy my own mother restored to life again, to compensate to me for all the friends I have lost, and all my connexions broken. She has a son at Cambridge in all respects worthy of such a mother, the most amiable young man I ever knew. His natural and acquired endowments are very considerable; and as to his virtues, I need only say that he is a christian. It ought to be a matter of daily thanksgiving to me, that I am admitted into the society of such persons; and I pray God to make me and keep me worthy of them.

Your brother Martin has been very kind to me, having written to me twice in a style which, though it was once irksome to me, to say the least, I now know how to value. I pray God to forgive me the many light things I have both said and thought of him and his labours. Hereafter I shall consider him as a burning and a shining light, and as one of those 'who, having turned many unto righteousness, shall shine hereafter as the stars for ever and ever.'

So much for the state of my heart; as to my spirits, I am cheerful and happy, and having peace with God have peace within myself. For the continuance of this blessing I trust to Him who gives it: and they who trust in Him shall never be confounded. Yours affectionately, W. C.

Huntingdon, at the Rev. Mr. Unwin's,
March 12, 1785.

TO MRS. COWPER.

MY DEAR COUSIN,

I AGREE with you that letters are not essential to friendship; but they seem to be a natural fruit of it, when they are the only intercourse that can be had. And a friendship producing no sensible effects is so like indifference, that the appearance may easily deceive even an acute discerner. I retract, however, all that I said in my last upon this subject, having reason to suspect that it proceeded from a principle which I would discourage in myself upon all occasions, even a pride that felt itself hurt upon a mere suspicion of neglect. I have so much cause for humility, and so much need of it too, and every little sneaking resentment is such an enemy to it, that I hope I shall never give quarter to any thing that appears in the shape of sullenness, or self-consequence, hereafter. Alas! if my best Friend, who laid down his life for me, were to remember all the instances in which I have neglected him, and to plead them against me in judgment, where should I hide my guilty head in the day of recompense? I will pray, therefore, for blessings upon my friends, even though they cease

so be so; and upon my enemies, though they continue such. The deceitfulness of the natural heart is inconceivable. I know well that I passed upon my friends for a person at least religiously inclined, if not actually religious; and what is more wonderful, I thought myself a Christian, when I had no faith in Christ, when I saw no beauty in him that I should desire him; in short, when I had neither faith nor love, nor any christian grace whatever, but a thousand seeds of rebellion instead, evermore springing up in enmity against him. But blessed be God, even the God who is become my salvation, the hail of affliction, and rebuke for sin, has swept away the refuge of lies. It pleased the Almighty in great mercy to set all my misdeeds before me. At length, the storm being past, a quiet and peaceful serenity of soul succeeded, such as ever attends the gift of lively faith in the all-sufficient atonement, and the sweet sense of mercy and pardon purchased by the blood of Christ. Thus did he break me, and bind me up; thus did he wound me, and his hands made me whole. My dear cousin, I make no apology for entertaining you with the history of my conversion, because I know you to be a Christian in the sterling import of the appellation. This is however but a very summary account of the matter, neither would a letter contain the astonishing particulars of it. If we ever meet again in this world, I will relate them to you by word of mouth; if not, they will serve for the subject of a conference in the next, where I doubt not I shall remember and record them with a gratitude better suited to the subject.

Yours, my dear cousin, affectionately, W. C.

TO MRS. COWPER.

MY DEAR COUSIN, *April* 17, 1766.

As in matters unattainable by reason, and unrevealed in the Scripture, it is impossible to argue at all; so in matters concerning which reason can only give a probable guess, and the scripture has made no explicit discovery, it is, though not impossible to argue at all, yet impossible to argue to any certain conclusion. This seems to me to be the very case with the point in question—reason is able to form many plausible conjectures concerning the possibility of our knowing each other in a future state; and the scripture has, here and there, favoured us with an expression that looks at least like a slight intimation of it; but because a conjecture can never amount to a proof, and a slight intimation can not be construed into a positive assertion, therefore I think we can never come to any absolute conclusion upon the subject. We may indeed reason about the plausibility of our conjectures, and we may discuss, with great industry and shrewdness of argument, those passages in the scripture which seem to favour the opinion; but still, no certain means having been afforded us, no certain end can be attained; and after all that can be said, it will still be doubtful whether we shall know each other or not.

As to arguments founded upon human reason only, it would be easy to muster up a much greater number on the affirmative side of the question, than it would be worth my while to write, or yours to read. Let us see, therefore, what the scripture says, or seems to say, towards the proof of it; and of this kind of argument also I shall insert but a few of those which seem to me to be the fairest and clearest for the purpose. For after all, a disputant on either side of this question is in danger of that censure of our blessed Lord's, 'Ye do err, not knowing the scripture, nor the power of God.'

As to parables, I know it has been said, in the dispute concerning the intermediate state, that they are not argumentative; but this having been controverted by very wise and good men, and the parable of Dives and Lazarus having been used by such to prove an intermediate state, I see not why it may not be as fairly used for the proof of any other matter which it seems fairly to imply. In this parable we see that Dives is represented as knowing Lazarus, and Abraham as knowing them both, and the discourse between them is entirely concerning their respective characters and circumstances upon earth. Here, therefore, our Saviour seems to countenance the notion of a mutual knowledge and recollection; and if a soul that has perished shall know the soul that is saved, surely the heirs of salvation shall know and recollect each other.

In the first epistle to the Thessalonians, the second chapter, and nineteenth verse, St. Paul says, 'What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and our joy.'

As to the hope which the apostle has formed concerning them, he himself refers the accomplishment of it to the coming of Christ, meaning that then he should receive the recompense of his labours in their behalf; his joy and glory he refers likewise to the same period, both which would result from the sight of such numbers redeemed by the blessing of God upon his ministration, when he should present them before the great Judge, and say, in the words of a greater than himself, 'Lo! I, and the children whom thou hast given me.' This seems to imply that the apostle should know the converts, and the converts the apostle, at least at the day of judgment; and if then, why not afterwards?

See also the fourth chapter of that epistle, verses 13, 14, 16, which I have not room to transcribe.

Here the apostle comforts them under their affliction for their deceased brethren, exhorting them 'Not to sorrow as without hope;' and what is the hope by which he teaches them to support their spirits? Even this, 'That them which sleep in Jesus shall God bring with him.' In other words, and by a fair paraphrase surely, telling them that they are only taken from them for a season, and that they should receive them at their resurrection.

If you can take off the force of these texts, my dear cousin, you will go a great way towards shaking my opinion; if not, I think they must go a great way towards shaking yours.

The reason why I did not send you my opinion of Pearsall was, because I had not then read him; I have read him since, and like him much, especially the latter part of him; but you have whetted my curiosity to see the last letter by tearing it out: unless you can give me a good reason why I should not see it, I shall inquire for the book the first time I go to Cambridge. Perhaps I may be partial to Hervey for the sake of his other writings; but I can not give Pearsall the preference to him, for I think him one of the most scriptural writers in the world. Yours, W. C.

TO MRS. COWPER.

MY DEAR COUSIN, *April* 18, 1766.

HAVING gone as far as I thought needful to justify the opinion of our meeting and knowing each other hereafter, I find, upon reflection, that I have done but half my business, and that one of the questions you proposed, remains entirely unconsidered, viz. 'Whether the things of our present state will not be of too low and mean a nature to engage our thoughts, or make a part of our communications in heaven.'

The common and ordinary occurrences of life, no doubt, and even the ties of kindred, and of all temporal interests, will be entirely discarded from amongst that happy society; and possibly even the remembrance of them done away. But it does not therefore follow that our spiritual concerns, even in this life, will be forgotten; neither do I think that they can ever appear trifling to us in any the most distant period of eternity. God, as you say in reference to the scripture, will be all in all. But does not that expression mean, that being admitted to so near an approach to our heavenly Father and Redeemer, our whole nature, the soul and all its faculties, will be employed in praising and adoring him? Doubtless however this will be the case; and if so, will it not furnish out a glorious theme of thanksgiving, to recollect 'The rock whence we were hewn, and the hole of the pit whence we were digged?' To recollect the time when our faith, which under the tuition and nurture of the holy Spirit has produced such a plentiful harvest of immortal bliss, was as a grain of mustard seed, small in itself, promising but little fruit, and producing less? To recollect the various attempts that were made upon it, by the word, the flesh, and the devil, and its various triumphs over all, by the assistance of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ? At present, whatever our convictions may be of the sinfulness and corruption of our nature, we can make but a very imperfect estimate either of our weakness or our guilt. Then, no doubt, we shall understand the full value of the wonderful salvation wrought out for us: and it seems reasonable to suppose, that, in order to form a just idea of our redemption, we shall be able to form a just one of the danger we have escaped; when we know how weak and frail we were, surely we shall be more able to render due praise and honour to his strength who fought for us; when we know completely the hatefulness of sin in the sight of God, and how deeply we were tainted by it, we shall know how to value the blood by which we were cleansed as we ought. The twenty-four elders, in the fifth of the Revelations, give glory to God for their redemption out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation. This surely implies a retrospect to their respective conditions upon earth, and that each remembered out of what particular kindred and nation he had been redeemed; and if so, then surely the minutest circumstance of their redemption did not escape their memory. They who triumph over the beast, in the fifteenth chapter, sing the song of Moses, the servant of God; and what was that song? A sublime record of Israel's deliverance, and the destruction of her enemies in the Red Sea, typical no doubt of the song which the redeemed in Sion shall sing to celebrate their own salvation, and the defeat of their spiritual enemies. This, again, implies a recollection of the dangers they had before encountered, and the supplies of strength and ardour they had in every emergency received from the great deliverer out of all. These quotations do not indeed prove that their warfare upon earth includes a part of their converse with each other; but they prove that it is a theme not unworthy to be heard even before the throne of God, and therefore it can not be unfit for reciprocal communication.

But you doubt whether there is *any* communication between the blessed at all; neither do I recollect any scripture that proves it, or that bears any relation to the subject. But reason seems to require it so peremptorily, that a society without social intercourse seems to be a solecism, and a contradiction in terms; and the inhabitants of those regions are called, you know, an innumerable *company*, and an *assembly*, which seems to convey the idea of society as clearly as the word

itself. Human testimony weighs but little in matters of this sort, but let it have all the weight it can: I know no greater names in divinity than Watts and Doddridge; they were both of this opinion, and I send you the words of the latter:—

'Our *companions in glory* may probably assist us by their wise and good observations, when we come to make the *providence of God*, here upon earth, under the guidance and direction of our Lord Jesus Christ, the *subject of our mutual converse*.'

Thus, my dear cousin, I have spread out my reasons before you for an opinion which, whether admitted or denied, affects not the state or interest of our soul. May our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, conduct us into his own Jerusalem; where there shall be no night, neither any darkness at all; where we shall be free even from innocent error, and perfect in the light of the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Yours faithfully, W. C.

TO MRS. COWPER.

Huntingdon, Sept. 3, 1766.

My dear cousin,

It is reckoned, you know, a great achievement to silence an opponent in disputation; and your silence was of so long a continuance, that I might well begin to please myself with the apprehension of having accomplished so arduous a matter. To be serious, however, I am not sorry that what I have said concerning our knowledge of each other in a future state has a little inclined you to the affirmative. For though the redeemed of the Lord shall be sure of being as happy in that state as infinite power, employed by infinite goodness, can make them; and therefore it may seem immaterial whether we shall or shall not, recollect each other hereafter, yet our present happiness at least is a little interested in the question. A parent, a friend, a wife, must needs, I think, feel a little heartache at the thought of an eternal separation from the objects of her regard; and not to know them when she meets them in another life, or never to meet them at all, amounts, though not altogether, yet nearly to the same thing. Remember them I think she needs must. To hear that they are happy, will indeed be no small addition to her own felicity; but to see them so will surely be a greater. Thus at least it appears to our present human apprehension; consequently, therefore, to think that when we leave them, we lose them for ever, that we must remain eternally ignorant whether they, that were flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone, partake with us of celestial glory, or are disinherited of their heavenly portion, must shed a dismal gloom over all our present connexions. For my own part, this life is such a momentary thing, and all its interests have so shrunk in my estimation, since by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ I became attentive to the things of another, that, like a worm in the bud of all my friendships and affections, this very thought would eat out the heart of them all, had I a thousand; and were their date to terminate with this life, I think I should have no inclination to cultivate and improve such a fugitive business. Yet friendship is necessary to our happiness here; and built upon christian principles, upon which only it can stand, is a thing even of religious sanction—for what is that love which the Holy Spirit, speaking by St. John, so much inculcates, but friendship? the only love which deserves the name; a love which can toil, and watch, and deny itself, and go to death for its brother. Worldly friendships are a poor weed compared with this: and even this union of spirit in the bond of peace would suffer, in my mind at least, could I think it were only coeval with our earthly mansions. It may possibly argue great weakness in me, in this instance, to stand so much in need of future hopes to support me in the discharge of present duty. But so it is—I am far, I know, very far from being perfect in christian love, or any other divine attainment, and am therefore unwilling to forego whatever may help me in my progress.

You are so kind as to inquire after my health, for which reason I must tell you, what otherwise would not be worth mentioning, that I have lately been just enough indisposed to convince me that not only human life in general, but mine in particular, hangs by a slender thread. I am stout enough in appearance, yet a little illness demolishes me. I have had a severe shake, and the building is not so firm as it was. But I bless God for it with all my heart. If the inner man be but strengthened day by day, as, I hope, under the renewing influences of the Holy Ghost it will be, no matter how soon the outward is dissolved. He who has in a manner raised me from the dead, in a literal sense, has given me the grace, I trust, to be ready at the shortest notice to surrender up to him that life which I have twice received from him. Whether I live or die, I desire it may be to His glory, and it must be to my happiness.—I thank God that I have those amongst my kindred to whom I can write without reserve my sentiments upon this subject, as I do to you. A letter upon any other subject is more insipid to me than ever my task was when a schoolboy; and I say not this in vain glory, God forbid! but to show you what the Almighty, whose name I am unworthy to mention, has done for me, the chief of sinners. Once he was a terror to me, and his service, Oh what a

weariness it was! Now I can say I love him, and his holy name, and I am never so happy as when I speak of his mercies to me.

Yours, dear cousin, W. C.

TO MRS. COWPER.

MY DEAR COUSIN, *Huntingdon, Oct.* 20, 1766.

I AM very sorry for poor Charles's illness, and hope you will soon have cause to thank God for his complete recovery. We have an epidemical fever in this country likewise, which leaves behind it a continual sighing, almost to suffocation; not that I have seen any instance of it, for, blessed be God! our family have hitherto escaped it, but such was the account I heard of it this morning.

I am obliged to you for the interest you take in my welfare, and for your inquiring so particularly after the manner in which my time passes here. As to amusements, I mean what the world calls such, we have none; the place indeed swarms with them, and cards and dancing are the professed business of almost all the *gentle* inhabitants of Huntingdon. We refuse to take part in them, or to be accessaries to this way of murdering our time, and by so doing have acquired the name of Methodists. Having told you how we *do not* spend our time, I will next say how we do. We breakfast commonly between eight and nine; till eleven, we read either the Scripture, or the sermons of some faithful preacher of those holy mysteries; at eleven we attend Divine Service, which is performed here twice every day; and from twelve to three we separate and amuse ourselves as we please. During that interval I either read in my own apartment, or walk, or ride, or work in the garden. We seldom sit an hour after dinner, but if the weather permits adjourn to the garden, where with Mrs. Unwin and her son I have generally the pleasure of religious conversation till tea-time. If it rains, or is too windy for walking, we either converse within doors, or sing some hymns of Martin's collection, and by the help of Mrs. Unwin's harpsichord make up a tolerable concert, in which our hearts, I hope, are the best and most musical performers. After tea we sally forth to walk in good earnest. Mrs. Unwin is a good walker, and we have generally travelled about four miles before we see home again. When the days are short, we make this excursion in the former part of the day, between church-time and dinner. At night we read and converse, as before, till supper, and commonly finish the evening either with hymns or a sermon, and last of all the family are called to prayers. I need not tell *you* that such a life as this is consistent with the utmost cheerfulness; accordingly we are all happy, and dwell together in unity as brethren. Mrs. Unwin has almost a maternal affection for me, and I have something very like a filial one for her, and her son and I are brothers. Blessed be the God of our salvation for such companions, and for such a life; above all, for a heart to like it.

I have had many anxious thoughts about taking orders, and I believe every new convert is apt to think himself called upon for that purpose; but it has pleased God, by means which there is no need to particularize, to give me full satisfaction as to the propriety of declining it; indeed they who have the least idea of what I have suffered from the dread of public exhibitions, will readily excuse my never attempting them hereafter. In the meantime, if it please the Almighty, I may be an instrument of turning many to the truth in a private way, and I hope that my endeavours in this way have not been entirely unsuccessful. Had I the zeal of Moses, I should want an Aaron to be my spokesman.

Yours ever, my dear cousin, W. C.

TO MRS. COWPER.

MY DEAR COUSIN, *March* 11, 1767.

To find those whom I love, clearly and strongly persuaded of evangelical truth, gives me a pleasure superior to any thing that this world can afford me. Judge then, whether your letter, in which the body and substance of a saving faith is so evidently set forth, could meet with a lukewarm reception at my hands, or be entertained with indifference! Would you know the true reason of my long silence? Conscious that my religious principles are generally excepted against, and that the conduct they produce, wherever they are heartily maintained, is still more the object of disapprobation than those principles themselves; and remembering that I had made both the one and the other known to you, without having any clear assurance that our faith in Jesus was of the same stamp and character; I could not help thinking it possible that you might disapprove both my sentiments and practice; that you might think the one unsupported by Scripture, and the other whimsical, and unnecessarily strict and rigorous, and consequently would be rather pleased with the suspension of a correspondence, which a different way of thinking upon so momentous a subject as that we wrote upon, was likely to render tedious and irksome to you.

I have told you the truth from my heart; forgive me these injurious suspicions, and never imagine that I shall hear from you upon this delightful theme without a real joy, or without prayer to God to prosper you in the way of his truth, his sanctifying and saving truth. The book you mention lies now upon my table. Marshal is an old acquaintance of mine: I have both read him and heard him read with pleasure and edification. The

doctrines he maintains are, under the influence of the spirit of Christ, the very life of my soul, and the soul of all my happiness: that Jesus is a *present* Saviour from the guilt of sin by his most precious blood, and from the power of it by his spirit; that, corrupt and wretched in ourselves, in him, and in *him only*, we are complete; that being united to Jesus by a lively faith, we have a solid and eternal interest in his obedience and sufferings, to justify us before the face of our heavenly Father; and that all this inestimable treasure, the earnest of which is in grace, and its consummation in glory, is given, freely *given* to us of God; in short, that he hath opened the kingdom of Heaven *to all believers*. These are the truths which, by the grace of God, shall ever be dearer to me than life itself; shall ever be placed next my heart, as the throne whereon the Saviour himself shall sit, to sway all its motions, and reduce that world of iniquity and rebellion to a state of filial and affectionate obedience to the will of the most Holy.

These, my dear cousin, are the truths, to which by nature we are enemies—they debase the sinner, and exalt the Saviour, to a degree which the pride of our hearts (till Almighty grace subdues them) is determined never to allow. May the Almighty reveal his Son in our hearts continually more and more, and teach us to increase in love towards him continually, for having *given* us the unspeakable riches of Christ! Yours faithfully, W. C.

TO MRS. COWPER.

MY DEAR COUSIN, *March* 14, 1767.

I JUST add a line by way of Postscript to my last, to apprise you of the arrival of a very dear friend of mine at the Park on Friday next, the son of Mr. Unwin, whom I have desired to call on you, in his way from London to Huntingdon. If you knew him as well as I do, you would love him as much. But I leave the young man to speak for himself, which he is very able to do. He is ready possessed of an answer to every question you can possibly ask concerning me, and knows my *whole story* from first to last. I give you this previous notice, because I know you are not fond of strange faces, and because I thought it would in some degree save him the pain of announcing himself.

I am become a great florist, and shrub doctor. If the major can make up a small packet of seeds that will make a figure in a garden, where we have little else besides jessamine and honey-suckle; such a packet I mean as may be put in one's fob, I will promise to take great care of them, as I ought to value natives of the Park. They must not be such however as require great skill in the management, for at present I have no skill to spare.

I think Marshal one of the best writers, and the most spiritual expositor of Scripture, I ever read. I admire the strength of his argument, and the clearness of his reasonings, upon those parts of our most holy religion which are generally least understood, even by real christians, as masterpieces of the kind. His section upon the union of the soul with Christ is an instance of what I mean, in which he has spoken of a most mysterious truth with admirable perspicuity, and with great good sense, making it all the while subservient to his main purport of proving holiness to be the fruit and effect of faith.

I subjoin thus much upon that author, because, though you desired my opinion of him, I remember that in my last I rather left you to find it out by inference, than expressed it as I ought to have done. I never met with a man who understood the plan of salvation better, or was more happy in explaining it. W. C.

TO MRS. COWPER.

Huntingdon, April 3, 1767.

MY DEAR COUSIN,

YOU sent my friend Unwin home to us charmed with your kind reception of him, and with every thing he saw at the Park. Shall I once more give you a peep into my vile and deceitful heart? What motive do you think lay at the bottom of my conduct when I desired him to call upon you? I did not suspect at first that pride and vain glory had any share in it; but quickly after I had recommended the visit to him, I discovered in that fruitful soil the very root of the matter. You know I am a stranger here; all such are suspected characters, unless they bring their credentials with them. To this moment, I believe, it is matter of speculation in the place, whence I came, and to whom I belong.

Though my friend, you may suppose, before I was admitted an inmate here, was satisfied that I was not a mere vagabond, and has since that time received more convincing proofs of my *sponsibility*, yet I could not resist the opportunity of furnishing him with ocular demonstration of it, by introducing him to one of my most splendid connexions; that when he hears me called "*That fellow Cowper*," which has happened heretofore, he may be able, upon unquestionable evidence, to assert my gentlemanhood, and relieve me from the weight of that opprobrious appellation. Oh pride! pride! it deceives with the subtlety of a serpent, and seems to walk erect, though it crawls upon the earth. How will it twist and twine itself about, to get from under the cross, which it is the glory of our Christian calling to be able to bear with patience and good will. They who can guess at the heart of a stranger, and you especially, who are of a com-

passionate temper, will be more ready, perhaps, to excuse me, in this instance, than I can be to excuse myself. But in good truth, it was abominable pride of heart, indignation, and vanity, and deserves no better name. How should such a creature be admitted into those pure and sinless mansions, where nothing shall enter that defileth, did not the blood of Christ, applied by the hand of faith, take away the guilt of sin, and leave no spot or stain benind it? Oh what continual need have I of an almighty, all-sufficient Saviour! I am glad you are acquainted so *particularly* with *all* the circumstances of my story, for I know that your secrecy and discretion may be trusted with any thing. A thread of mercy ran through all the intricate maze of those afflictive providences, so mysterious to myself at the time, and which must ever remain so to all, who will not see what was the great design of them; at the judgment-seat of Christ the whole shall be laid open. How is the rod of iron changed into a sceptre of love!

I thank you for the seeds: I have committed some of each sort to the ground, whence they will soon spring up like so many mementos to remind me of my friends at the Park. W. C.

TO MRS. COWPER.

Huntingdon, July 13, 1767.

MY DEAR COUSIN,

The newspaper has told you the truth. Poor Mr. Urwin being flung from his horse, as he was going to his church on Sunday morning, received a dreadful fracture on the back part of the scull, under which he languished till Thursday evening, and then died. This awful dispensation has left an impression upon our spirits, which will not presently be worn off. He died in a poor cottage, to which he was carried immediately after his fall, about a mile from home; and his body could not be brought to his house, till the spirit was gone to him who gave it. May it be a lesson to us to watch, since we know not the day nor the hour when our Lord cometh!

The effect of it upon my circumstances will only be a change of the place of my abode. For I shall still, by God's leave, continue with Mrs. Unwin, whose behaviour to me has always been that of a mother to a son. We know not yet where we shall settle, but we trust that the Lord, whom we seek, will go before us, and prepare a rest for us. We have employed our friend Haweis, Dr. Conyers of Helmsley in Yorkshire, and Mr. Newton of Olney, to look out a place for us, but at present are entirely ignorant under which of the three we shall settle, or whether under either. I have written to my aunt Madan, to desire Martin to assist us with his inquiries. It is probable we shall stay here till Michaelmas. W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

Huntingdon, July 16, 1767.

DEAR JOE,

Your wishes that the newspapers may have misinformed you are vain. Mr. Unwin is dead, and died in the manner there mentioned. At nine o'clock on Sunday morning he was in perfect health, and as likely to live twenty years as either of us, and before ten was stretched speechless and senseless upon a flock bed, in a poor cottage, where (it being impossible to remove him) he died on Thursday evening. I heard his dying groans, the effect of great agony, for he was a strong man, and much convulsed in his last moments. The few short intervals of sense that were indulged him he spent in earnest prayer, and in expressions of a firm trust and confidence in the only Saviour. T that strong hold we must all resort at last, if w would have hope in our death: when every other refuge fails, we are glad to fly to the only shelter, to which we can repair to any purpose; and happy is it for us when, the false ground we have chosen for ourselves being broken under us, we find ourselves obliged to have recourse to the rock which can never be shaken; when this is our lot, we receive great and undeserved mercy.

Our society will not break up, but we shall settle in some other place; where, is at present uncertain.* Yours, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR JOE, *Olney, June* 16, 1768.

I thank you for so full an answer to so empty an epistle. If Olney furnished any thing for your amusement, you should have it in return; but occurrences here are as scarce as cucumbers at Christmas.

I visited St. Alban's about a fortnight since in person, and I visit it every day in thought. The recollection of what passed there, and the consequences that followed it, fill my mind continually, and make the circumstances of a poor transient half-spent life so insipid and unaffecting, that I have no heart to think or write much about them. Whether the nation is worshipping Mr. Wilkes or any other idol, is of little moment to one who hopes and believes that he shall shortly

* On the fourteenth of October following, the Society was settled in the town of Olney in Buckinghamshire, of which the Rev. Mr. Newton was curate.

stand in the presence of the great and blessed God. I thank him that he has given me such a deep impressed persuasion of this awful truth, as a thousand worlds would not purchase from me. It gives a relish to every blessing, and makes every trouble light.

Affectionately yours, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR JOE, 1769.

Sir Thomas crosses the Alps, and Sir Cowper, for that is his title at Olney, prefers his home to any other spot of earth in the world. Horace, observing this difference of temper in different persons, cried out a good many years ago, in the true spirit of poetry, 'how much one man differs from another!' This does not seem a very sublime exclamation in English, but I remember we were taught to admire it in the original.

My dear friend, I am obliged to you for your invitation: but being long accustomed to retirement, which I was always fond of, I am now more than ever unwilling to revisit those noisy and crowded scenes which I never loved, and which I now abhor. I remember you with all the friendship I ever professed, which is as much as I ever entertained for any man. But the strange and uncommon incidents of my life have given an entire new turn to my whole character and conduct, and rendered me incapable of receiving pleasure from the same employments and amusements of which I could readily partake in former days.

I love you and yours, I thank you for your continued remembrance of me, and shall not cease to be their and your

Affectionate friend and servant, W. C.

TO MRS. COWPER.

MY DEAR COUSIN,

I have not been behindhand in reproaching myself with neglect, but desire to take shame to myself for my unprofitableness in this, as well as in all other respects. I take the next immediate opportunity however of thanking you for yours, and of assuring you, that instead of being surprised at your silence, I rather wonder that you, or any of my friends, have any room left for so careless and negligent a correspondent in your memories. I am obliged to you for the intelligence you send me of my kindred, and rejoice to hear of their welfare. He who settles the bounds of our habitations has at length cast our lot at a great distance from each other; but I do not therefore forget their former kindness to me, or cease to be interested in their well being. You live in the centre of a world I know you do not delight in. Happy are you, my dear friend, in being able to discern the insufficiency of all it can afford to fill and satisfy the desires of an immortal soul. That God who created us for the enjoyment of himself, has determined in mercy that it shall fail us here, in order that the blessed result of all our inquiries after happiness in the creature may be a warm pursuit and a close attachment to our true interests, in fellowship and communion with Him, through the name and mediation of a dear Redeemer. I bless his goodness and grace, that I have any reason to hope I am a partaker with you in the desire after better things, than are to be found in a world polluted with sin, and therefore devoted to destruction. May he enable us both to consider our present life in its only true light, as an opportunity put into our hands to glorify him amongst men, by a conduct suited to his word and will. I am miserably defective in this holy and blessed art, but I hope there is at the bottom of all my sinful infirmities a sincere desire to live just so long as I may be enabled, in some poor measure, to answer the end of my existence in this respect, and then to obey the summons, and attend him in a world where they who are his servants here shall pay him an unsinful obedience for ever. Your dear mother is too good to me, and puts a more charitable construction upon my silence than the fact will warrant. I am not better employed than I should be in corresponding with her. I have that within which hinders me wretchedly in every thing that I ought to do, but is prone to trifle, and let time and every good thing run to waste. I hope however to write to her soon.

My love and best wishes attend Mr. Cowper, and all that inquire after me. May God be with you, to bless you, and do you good by all his dispensations; don't forget me when you are speaking to our best friend before his Mercy-seat.

Yours ever, W. C.

N. B. *I am not married.*

TO MRS. COWPER.

MY DEAR COUSIN, *Olney, August* 31, 1769.

A letter from your brother Frederic brought me yesterday the most afflicting intelligence that has reached me these many years. I pray to God to comfort you, and to enable you to sustain this heavy stroke with that resignation to his will, which none but himself can give, and which he gives to none but his own children. How blessed and happy is your lot, my dear friend, beyond the common lot of the greater part of mankind; that you know what it is to draw near to God in prayer, and are acquainted with a Throne of Grace! You have resources in the infinite love of a dear Redeemer, which are withheld from millions: and

the promises of God, which are yea and amen in Jesus, are sufficient to answer all your necessities, and to sweeten the bitterest cup which your heavenly Father will ever put into your hand. May he now give you liberty to drink at these wells of salvation, till you are filled with consolation and peace in the midst of trouble! He has said, when thou passest through the fire I will be with thee, and when through the floods, they shall not overflow thee. You have need of such a word as this, and he knows your need of it, and the time of necessity is the time when he will be sure to appear in behalf of those who trust in him. I bear you and yours upon my heart before him night and day, for I never expect to hear of distress which shall call upon me with a louder voice to pray for the sufferer. I know the Lord hears me for myself, vile and sinful as I am, and believe and am sure that he will hear me for you also. He is the friend of the widow, and the father of the fatherless, even God in his holy habitation; in all our afflictions he is afflicted, and chastens us in mercy. Surely he will sanctify this dispensation to you, do you great and everlasting good by it, make the world appear like dust and vanity in your sight, as it truly is, and open to your view the glories of a better country, where there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor pain, but God shall wipe away all tears from your eyes forever. O that comfortable word! 'I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction;' so that our very sorrows are evidences of our calling, and he chastens us, because we are his children.

My dear cousin, I commit you to the word of his grace, and to the comforts of his holy spirit. Your life is needful for your family; may God in mercy to them prolong it, and may he preserve you from the dangerous effects, which a stroke like this might have upon a frame so tender as yours. I grieve with you, I pray for you; could I do more, I would, but God must comfort you.

Yours, in our dear Lord Jesus, W. C.

TO MRS. COWPER.

March 5, 1770.

My brother continues much as he was. His case is a very dangerous one. An imposthume of the liver, attended by an asthma and dropsy. The physician has little hope of his recovery. I believe I might say none at all; only being a friend he does not formally give him over, by ceasing to visit him, lest it should sink his spirits. For my own part I have no expectation of his recovery, except by a signal interposition of Providence in answer to prayer. His case is clearly out of the reach of medicine; but I have seen many a sickness healed, where the danger has been equally threatening, by the only physician of value. I doubt not he will have an interest in your prayers, as he has in the prayers of many. May the Lord incline his ear, and give an answer of peace! I know it is good to be afflicted. I trust that you have found it so, and that under the teaching of God's own spirit we shall both be purified. It is the desire of my soul to seek a better country, where God shall wipe away all tears from the eyes of his people: and where, looking back upon the ways by which he has led us, we shall be filled with everlasting wonder, love, and praise. I must add no more. Yours ever, W. C.

TO THE REV. J. NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *March* 31, 1770.

I AM glad that the Lord made you a fellow labourer with us in praying my dear brother out of darkness into light. It was a blessed work: and when it shall be your turn to die in the Lord, and to rest from all your labours, that work shall follow you. I once entertained hopes of his recovery: from the moment when it pleased God to give him light in his soul, there was for four days such a visible amendment in his body as surprised us all. Dr. Glynn himself was puzzled, and began to think that all his threatening conjectures would fail of their accomplishment. I am well satisfied that it was thus ordered, not for his own sake, but for the sake of us, who had been so deeply concerned for his spiritual welfare, that he might be able to give such evident proof of the work of God upon his soul as should leave no doubt behind it. As to his friends at Cambridge, they knew nothing of the matter. He never spoke of these things but to myself, nor to me, when others were within hearing, except that he sometimes would speak in the presence of the nurse. He knew well to make the distinction between those who could understand him, and those who could not; and that he was not in circumstances to maintain such a controversy as a declaration of his new views and sentiments would have exposed him to. Just after his death I spoke of this change to a dear friend of his, a fellow of the college, who had attended him through all his sickness with assiduity and tenderness. But he did not understand me.

I now proceed to mention such particulars as I can recollect, and which I had not opportunity to insert in my letters to Olney; for I left Cambridge suddenly, and sooner than I expected. He was deeply impressed with a sense of the difficulties he should have to encounter, if it should please God to raise him again. He saw the necessity of being faithful, and the opposition he should expose himself to by being so. Under the weight of

these thoughts he one day broke out in the following prayer, when only myself was with him, 'O Lord, thou art light; and in thee is no darkness at all. Thou art the fountain of all wisdom, and it is essential to thee to be good and gracious. I am a child, O Lord, teach me how I shall conduct myself! Give me the wisdom of the serpent with the harmlessness of the dove! Bless the souls thou hast committed to the care of thy helpless miserable creature, who has no wisdom or knowledge of his own, and make me faithful to them for thy mercy's sake!' Another time he said, 'How wonderful it is, that God should look upon man; and how much more wonderful, that he should look upon such a worm as I am! Yet he does look upon me, and takes the exactest notice of all my sufferings. He is present and I see him (I mean by faith); and he stretches out his arms towards me'—and he then stretched out his own—and he says—'Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest!' He smiled and wept, when he spoke these words. When he expressed himself upon these subjects, there was a weight and a dignity in his manner such as I never saw before. He spoke with the greatest deliberation, making a pause at the end of every sentence; and there was something in his air and in the tone of his voice, inexpressibly solemn, unlike himself, unlike what I had ever seen in another.

This hath God wrought. I have praised him for his marvellous act, and have felt a joy of heart upon the subject of my brother's death, such as I never felt but in my own conversion. He is now before the throne; and yet a little while and we shall meet, never more to be divided.

Yours, my very dear friend, with my affectionate respects to yourself and yours.

WILLIAM COWPER.

Postscript. A day or two before his death he grew so weak and was so very ill, that he required continual attendance, so that he had neither strength nor opportunity to say much to me. Only the day before he said he had a sleepless, but a composed and quiet night. I asked him, if he had been able to collect his thoughts. He replied, 'All night long I have endeavoured to think upon God and to continue in prayer. I had great peace and comfort; and what comfort I had came in that way.' When I saw him the next morning at seven o'clock he was dying, fast asleep, and exempted, in all appearance, from the sense of those pangs which accompany dissolution. I shall be glad to hear from you, my dear friend, when you can find time to write, and are so inclined. The death of my beloved brother teems with many useful lessons. May God seal the instruction upon our hearts!

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR JOE, *May* 8, 1770.

Your letter did not reach me till the last post, when I had not time to answer it. I left Cambridge immediately after my brother's death.

I am obliged to you for the particular account you have sent me * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *. He to whom I have surrendered myself and all my concerns hath otherwise appointed, and let his will be done. He gives me much which he withholds from others; and if he was pleased to withhold all that makes an outward difference between me and the poor mendicant in the street, it would still become me to say, his will be done.

It pleased God to cut short my brother's connexions and expectations here, yet not without giving him lively and glorious views of a better happiness than any he could propose to himself in such a world as this. Notwithstanding his great learning, (for he was one of the chief men in the university in that respect) he was candid and sincere in his inquiries after truth. Though he could not come into my sentiments when I first acquainted him with them, nor in the many conversations which I afterwards had with him upon the subject, could he be brought to acquiesce in them as scriptural and true, yet I had no sooner left St. Alban's than he began to study with the deepest attention those points in which we differed, and to furnish himself with the best writers upon them. His mind was kept open to conviction for five years, during all which time he laboured in this pursuit with unwearied diligence, as leisure and opportunity were afforded. Amongst his dying words were these, 'Brother, I thought you wrong, yet wanted to believe as you did. I found myself not able to believe, yet always thought I should be one day brought to do so.' From the study of books, he was brought upon his deathbed to the study of himself, and there learnt to renounce his righteousness, and his own most amiable character, and to submit himself to the righteousness which is of God by faith. With these views he was desirous of death. Satisfied of his interest in the blessing purchased by the blood of Christ, he prayed for death with earnestness, felt the approaches of it with joy, and died in peace. Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO MRS. COWPER.

MY DEAR COUSIN, *Olney, June* 7, 1770.

I AM am obliged to you for sometimes thinking of an unseen friend, and bestowing a letter upon me. It gives me pleasure to hear from you, especially to find that our gracious Lord enables

you to weather out the storms you meet with, and to cast anchor within the veil.

You judge rightly of the manner in which I have been affected by the Lord's late dispensation towards my brother. I found in it cause of sorrow, that I had lost so near a relation, and one so deservedly dear to me, and that he left me just when our sentiments upon the most interesting subject became the same; but much more cause of joy, that it pleased God to give me clear and evident proof that he had changed his heart, and adopted him into the number of his children. For this I hold myself peculiarly bound to thank him, because he might have done all that he was pleased to do for him, and yet have afforded him neither strength nor opportunity to declare it. I doubt not that he enlightens the understandings, and works a gracious change in the hearts of many in their last moments, whose surrounding friends are not made acquainted with it.

He told me that from the time he was first ordained he began to be dissatisfied with his religious opinions, and to suspect that there were greater things concealed in the Bible, than were generally believed or allowed to be there. From the time when I first visited him after my release from St. Alban's, he began to read upon the subject. It was at that time I informed him of the views of divine truth which I had received in that school of affliction. He laid what I said to heart, and began to furnish himself with the best writers upon the controverted points, whose works he read with great diligence and attention, comparing them all the while with the Scripture. None ever truly and ingenuously sought the truth but they found it. A spirit of earnest inquiry is the gift of God, who never says to any, Seek ye my face in vain. Accordingly, about ten days before his death, it pleased the Lord to dispel all his doubts, and to reveal in his heart the knowledge of the Saviour, and to give him firm and unshaken peace in the belief of his ability and willingness to save. As to the affair of the fortune-teller, he never mentioned it to me, nor was there any such paper found as you mention. I looked over all his papers before I left the place, and had there been such a one, must have discovered it. I have heard the report from other quarters, but no other particulars than that the woman foretold him when he should die. I suppose there may be some truth in the matter, but whatever he might think of it before his knowledge of the truth, and however extraordinary her predictions might really be, I am satisfied that he had then received far other views of the wisdom and majesty of God, than to suppose that he would entrust his secret counsels to a vagrant, who did not mean, I suppose, to be understood to have received her intelligence from the Fountain of Light, but thought herself sufficiently honoured by any who would give her credit for a secret intercourse of this kind with the prince of darkness.

Mrs. Unwin is much obliged to you for your kind inquiry after her. She is well, I thank God, as usual, and sends her respects to you. Her son is in the ministry, and has the living of Stock, in Essex. We were last week alarmed with an account of his being dangerously ill; Mrs. Unwin went to see him, and in a few days left him out of danger.

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR JOE, *Sept.* 25, 1770.

I HAVE not done conversing with terrestrial objects, though I should be happy were I able to hold more continual converse with a friend above the skies. He has my heart, but he allows a corner in it for all who show me kindness, and therefore one for you. The storm of sixty-three made a wreck of the friendships I had contracted in the course of many years, yours excepted, which has survived the tempest.

I thank you for your repeated invitation. Singular thanks are due to you for so *singular* an instance of your regard. I could not leave Olney, unless in a case of absolute necessity, without much inconvenience to myself and others.

W. C.*

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

DEAR UNWIN, *June* 8, 1778.

I FEEL myself much obliged to you for your kind intimation, and have given the subject of it all my best attention, both before I received your letter and since. The result is, that I am persuaded it will be better not to write. I know the man and his disposition well; he is very liberal in his way of thinking, generous and discerning. He is well aware of the tricks that are played upon such occasions, and after fifteen years interruption of all intercourse between us, would translate my letter into this language—pray remember the poor. This would disgust him, because he would think our former intimacy disgraced by such an oblique application. He has not forgotten me, and if he had, there are those about him who can not come into his presence without reminding him of me, and he is also perfectly acquainted with my circumstances. It would perhaps give him pleasure to surprise me with a benefit; and if he

* The subsequent chasm in the Letters of this Volume was occasioned by a long and severe illness with which the writer was afflicted.

means me such a favour, I should disappoint him by asking it.

I repeat my thanks for your suggestion; you see a part of my reasons for thus conducting myself; if we were together I could give you more.*

Yours affectionately, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

May 26, 1779.

I AM obliged to you for the Poets; and though I little thought I was translating so much money out of your pocket into the bookseller's, when I turned Prior's poem into Latin, yet I must needs say that, if you think it worth while to purchase the English Classics at all, you can not possess yourself of them upon better terms. I have looked into some of the volumes, but not having yet finished the Register, have merely looked into them. A few things I have met with, which if they had been burned the moment they were written, it would have been better for the author, and at least as well for his readers. There is not much of this, but a little too much. I think it a pity the editor admitted any; the English muse would have lost no credit by the omission of such trash. Some of them again seem to me to have but a very disputable right to a place among the Classics; and I am quite at a loss when I see them in such company, to conjecture what is Dr. Johnson's idea or definition of classical merit. But if he inserts the poems of some who can hardly be said to deserve such an honour, the purchaser may comfort himself with the hope that he will exclude none that do.

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

AMICO MIO, *Sept.* 21, 1779.

BE pleased to buy me a glazier's diamond pencil. I have glazed the two frames designed to receive my pine plants. But I can not mend the kitchen windows, till by the help of that implement I can reduce the glass to its proper dimensions. If I were a plumber I should be a complete glazier; and possibly the happy time may come, when I shall be seen trudging away to the neighbouring towns with a shelf of glass hanging at my back. If government should impose another tax upon that commodity, I hardly know a business in which a gentleman might more successfully employ himself. A Chinese, of ten times my fortune, would avail himself of such an opportunity without scruple; and why should not I, who want money as much as any mandarin in China? Rousseau would have been charmed to have seen me so occupied, and would have exclaimed with rapture, "that he had found the Emilius who (he supposed) had subsisted only in his own idea." I would recommend it to you to follow my example. You will presently qualify yourself for the task, and may not only amuse yourself at home, but may even exercise your skill in mending the church windows; which, as it would save money to the parish, would conduce, together with your other ministerial accomplishments, to make you extremely popular in the place.

I have eight pair of tame pigeons. When I first enter the garden in a morning, I find them perched upon the wall, waiting for their breakfast; for I feed them always upon the gravel-walk. If your wish should be accomplished, and you should find yourself furnished with the wings of a dove, I shall undoubtedly find you amongst them. Only be so good, if that should be the case, to announce yourself by some means or other. For I imagine your crop will require something better than tares to fill it.

Your mother and I last week made a trip in a post chaise to Gayhurst, the seat of Mr. Wright, about four miles off. He understood that I did not much affect strange faces, and sent over his servant on purpose to inform me that he was going into Leicestershire, and that, if I chose to see the gardens, I might gratify myself without danger of seeing the proprietor. I accepted the invitation, and was delighted with all I found there. The situation is happy, the gardens elegantly disposed. the hot-house in the most flourishing state, and the orange-trees the most captivating creatures of the kind I ever saw. A man, in short, had need have the talents of Cox or Langford, the auctioneers, to do the whole scene justice. Our love attends you all.

Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Oct.* 31, 1779.

I WROTE my last letter merely to inform you that I had nothing to say, in answer to which you have said nothing. I admire the propriety of your conduct, though I am a loser by it. I will endeavour to say something now, and shall hope for something in return.

I have been well entertained with Johnson's biography, for which I thank you; with one exception, and that a swinging one, I think he has acquitted himself with his usual good sense and sufficiency. His treatment of Milton is unmerciful to the last degree. He has belaboured that great poet's character with the most industrious

* The allusion in this letter is to Lord Thurlow, who was promoted to the Lord High Chancellorship of England in the early part of the month in which it was written.

cruelty. As a man, he has hardly left him the shadow of one good quality. Churlishness in his private life, and a rancorous hatred of every thing royal in his public, are the two colours with which he has smeared all the canvas. If he had any virtues, they are not to be found in the doctor's picture of him, and it is well for Milton that some sourness in his temper is the only vice with which his memory has been charged; it is evident enough that if his biographer could have discovered more, he would not have spared him. As a poet, he has treated him with severity enough, and has plucked one or two of the most beautiful feathers out of his Muse's wing, and trampled them under his great foot. He has passed sentence of condemnation upon Lycidas, and has taken occasion, from that charming poem, to expose to ridicule (what is indeed ridiculous enough) the childish prattlement of pastoral compositions, as if Lycidas was the prototype and pattern of them all. The liveliness of the description, the sweetness of the numbers, the classical spirit of antiquity that prevails in it, go for nothing. I am convinced, by the way, that he has no ear for poetical numbers, or that it was stopped by prejudice against the harmony of Milton's. Was there ever any thing so delightful as the music of the Paradise Lost? It is like that of a fine organ; has the fullest and the deepest tones of majesty, with all the softness and elegance of the Dorian flute. Variety without end, and never equalled, unless perhaps by Virgil. Yet the doctor has little or nothing to say upon this copious theme, but talks something about the unfitness of the English language for blank verse, and how apt it is in the mouth of some readers, to degenerate into declamation.

I could talk a good while longer, but I have no room; our love attends you.

Yours affectionately, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Dec.* 2, 1779.

How quick is the succession of human events! The cares of to-day are seldom the cares of to-morrow; and when we lie down at night, we may safely say to most of our troubles "Ye have done your worst, and we shall meet no more."

This observation was suggested to me by reading your last letter; which though I have written since I received it, I have never answered. When that epistle passed under your pen, you were miserable about your tithes, and your imagination was hung round with pictures, that terrified you to such a degree as made even the receipt of money burdensome. But it is all over now. You sent away your farmers in good humour (for you can make people merry whenever you please), and now you have nothing to do but to chink your purse, and laugh at what is past. Your delicacy makes you groan under that which other men never feel, or feel but lightly. A fly that settles upon the tip of the nose, is troublesome; and this is a comparison adequate to the most that mankind in general are sensible of, upon such tiny occasions. But the flies that pester you, always get between your eye-lids, where the annoyance is almost insupportable.

I would follow your advice, and endeavour to furnish Lord North with a scheme of supplies for the ensuing year, if the difficulty I find in answering the call of my own emergencies did not make me despair of satisfying those of the nation. I can say but this; if I had ten acres of land in the world, whereas I have not one, and in those ten acres should discover a gold mine, richer than all Mexico and Peru, when I had reserved a few ounces for my own annual supply, I would willingly give the rest to government. My ambition would be more gratified by annihilating the national incumbrances than by going daily down to the bottom of a mine to wallow in my own emolument. This is patriotism—you will allow; but alas, this virtue is for the most part in the hands of those who can do no good with it! He that has but a single handful of it, catches so greedily at the first opportunity of growing rich, that his patriotism drops to the ground, and he grasps the gold instead of it. He that never meets with such an opportunity, holds it fast in his clenched fist, and says,—"Oh, how much good I would do if I could!"

Your mother says—"Pray send my dear love." There is hardly room to add mine, but you will suppose it. Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Feb.* 27, 1780.

As you are pleased to desire my letters, I am the more pleased with writing them, though, at the same time, I must needs testify my surprise that you should think them worth receiving, as I seldom send one that I think favourably of myself. This is not to be understood as an imputation upon your taste or judgment, but as an encomium upon my own modesty and humility, which I desire you to remark well. It is a just observation of Sir Joshua Reynolds, that though men of ordinary talents may be highly satisfied with their own productions, men of true genius never are. Whatever be their subject, they always seem to themselves to fall short of it, even when they seem to others most to excel. And for this reason—because they have a certain sublime sense of perfection which other men are strangers to, and which they themselves in their performances are

not able to exemplify. Your servant, Sir Joshua! I little thought of seeing you when I began, but as you have popped in you are welcome.

When I wrote last, I was little inclined to send you a copy of verses entitled the Modern Patriot, but was not quite pleased with a line or two which I found it difficult to mend, therefore did not. At night I read Mr. Burke's speech in the newspaper, and was so well pleased with his proposals for a reformation, and with the temper in which he made them, that I began to think better of his cause, and burnt my verses. Such is the lot of the man who writes upon the subject of the day: the aspect of affairs changes in an hour or two, and his opinion with it; what was just and well-deserved satire in the morning, in the evening becomes a libel; the author commences his own judge, and while he condemns with unrelenting severity what he so lately approved, is sorry to find that he has laid his leaf-gold upon touch-wood, which crumbled away under his fingers. Alas! what can I do with my wit? I have not enough to do great things with, and these little things are so fugitive, that while a man catches at the subject, he is only filling his hand with smoke. I must do with it as I do with my linnet; I keep him for the most part in a cage, but now and then set open the door that he may whisk about the room a little, and then shut him up again. My whisking wit has produced the following, the subject of which is more important than the manner in which I have treated it seems to imply, but a fable may speak truth, and all truth is sterling; I only premise, that in a philosophical tract in the Register, I found it asserted that the glow-worm is the nightingale's food.*

An officer of a regiment, part of which is quartered here, gave one of the soldiers leave to be drunk six weeks, in hopes of curing him by satiety—he *was* drunk six weeks, and is so still, as often as he can find an opportunity. One vice may swallow up another, but no coroner in the state of Ethics ever brought in his verdict, when a vice died, that it was—*felo de se*.

Thanks for all you have done, and all you intend; the biography will be particularly welcome.

Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. J. NEWTON.

March 18, 1780.

I AM obliged to you for the communication of your correspondence with ——. It was impossible for any man, of any temper whatever, and however wedded to his own purpose, to resent so gentle and friendly an exhortation as you sent him. Men of lively imaginations are not often remarkable for solidity of judgment. They have generally strong passions to bias it, and are led far away from their proper road, in pursuit of pretty phantoms of their own creating. No law ever did or can effect what he has ascribed to that of Moses; it is reserved for mercy to subdue the corrupt inclinations of mankind, which threatenings and penalties, through the depravity of the heart, have always had a tendency rather to inflame.

The love of power seems as natural to kings, as the desire of liberty is to their subjects; the excess of either is vicious, and tends to the ruin of both. There are many, I believe, who wish the present corrupt state of things dissolved, in hope that the pure primitive constitution will spring up from the ruins. But it is not for man, by himself man, to bring order out of confusion; the progress from one to the other is not natural, much less necessary, and without the intervention of divine aid, impossible; and they who are for making the hazardous experiment, would certainly find themselves disappointed.

Affectionately yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *March* 28, 1780.

I have heard nothing more from Mr. Newton, upon the subject you mention; but I dare say that having been given to expect the benefit of your nomination in behalf of his nephew, he still depends upon it. His obligations to Mr. —— have been so numerous, and so weighty, that though he has, in a few instances, prevailed upon himself to recommend an object now and then to his patronage, he has very sparingly, if at all, exerted his interest with him in behalf of his own relations.

With respect to the advice you are required to give to a young lady, that she may be properly instructed in the manner of keeping the sabbath, I just subjoin a few hints that have occurred to me upon the occasion; not because I think you want them, but because it would seem unkind to withhold them. The sabbath then, I think, may be considered, first, as a commandment, no less binding upon modern christians than upon ancient Jews, because the spiritual people amongst them did not think it enough to abstain from manual occupations upon that day; but, entering more deeply into the meaning of the precept, allotted those hours they took from the world, to the cultivation of holiness in their own souls, which ever was, and ever will be a duty incumbent upon all who ever heard of a sabbath, and is of perpetual obligation both upon Jews and christians; the com-

* This letter contained the beautiful fable of the Nightingale and Glow-worm.

mandment, therefore, enjoins it; the prophets have also enforced it; and in many instances, both scriptural and modern, the breach of it has been punished with providential and judicial severity that may make by-standers tremble): secondly, as a privilege, which you well know how to dilate upon, better than I can tell you: thirdly, as a sign of that covenant by which believers are entitled to a rest that yet remaineth: fourthly, as the *sine qua non* of the christian character; and upon this head I should guard against being misunderstood to mean no more than two attendances upon public worship, which is a form complied with by thousands who never kept a sabbath in their lives. Consistence is necessary, to give substance and solidity to the whole. To sanctify the day at church, and to trifle it away out of church, is profanation, and vitiates all. After all, I could ask my catechumen one short question—'Do you love the day, or do you not? If you love it, you will never inquire how far you may safely deprive yourself of the enjoyment of it. If you do not love it, and you find yourself obliged in conscience to acknowledge it, that is an alarming symptom, and ought to make you tremble. If you do not love it, then it is a weariness to you, and you wish it was over. The ideas of labour and rest are not more opposite to each other than the idea of a sabbath, and that dislike and disgust with which it fills the souls of thousands to be obliged to keep it. It is worse than bodily labour.' W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *April* 6, 1780.

I NEVER was, any more than yourself, a friend to pluralities; they are generally found in the hands of the avaricious, whose insatiable hunger after preferment proves them unworthy of any at all. They attend much to the regular payment of their dues, but not at all to the spiritual interest of their parishioners. Having forgot their duty, or never known it, they differ in nothing from the laity, except their outward garb, and their exclusive right to the desk and pulpit. But when pluralities seek the man, instead of being sought by him; and when the man is honest, conscientious, and pious; careful to employ a substitute in those respects like himself; and, not contented with this, will see with his own eyes that the concerns of his parishes are decently and diligently administered; in that case, considering the present dearth of such characters in the ministry, I think it an event advantageous to the people, and much to be desired by all who regret the great and apparent want of sobriety and earnestness among the clergy. A man who does not seek a living merely as a pecuniary emolument has no need, in my judgment, to refuse one because it is so. He means to do his duty, and by doing it he earns his wages. The two rectories being contiguous to each other, and following easily under the care of one pastor, and both so near to Stock that you can visit them without difficulty, as often as you please, I see no reasonable objection, nor does your mother. As to the wry-mouthed sneers and illiberal misconstructions of the censorious, I know no better shield to guard you against them, than what you are already furnished with · a clear and unoffending conscience.

I am obliged to you for what you said upon the subject of book-buying, and am very fond of availing myself of another man's pocket, when I can do it creditably to myself, and without injury to him. Amusements are necessary, in a retirement like mine, especially in such a sable state of mind as I labour under. The necessity of amusement makes me sometimes write verses—it made me a carpenter, a bird-cage maker, a gardener—and has lately taught me to draw, and to draw too with such surprising proficiency in the art, considering my total ignorance of it two months ago, that when I show your mother my productions, she is all admiration and applause.

You need never fear the communication of what you entrust to us in confidence. You know your mother's delicacy in this point sufficiently; and as for me, I once wrote a Connoisseur upon the subject of secret keeping, and from that day to this I believe I have never divulged one.

We were much pleased with Mr. Newton's application to you for a charity sermon, and with what he said upon that subject in his last letter, 'that he was glad of an opportunity to give you that proof of his regard.'

Believe me yours, W. C

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Olney, April 16, 1780.

SINCE I wrote my last we have had a visit from ———. I did not feel myself vehemently disposed to receive him with that complaisance, from which a stranger generally infers that he is welcome. By his manner, which was rather bold than easy, I judged that there was no occasion for it, and that it was a trifle which, if he did not meet with, neither would he feel the want of. He has the air of a traveled man, but not of a traveled gentleman; is quite delivered from that reserve which is so common an ingredient in the English character, yet does not open himself gently and gradually, as men of polite behaviour do, but bursts upon you all at once. He talks very loud, and when our poor little robins hear a great noise, they are immediately seized with an ambition to surpass

it; the increase of their vociferation occasioned an increase of his, and his in return acted as a stimulus upon theirs; neither side entertained a thought of giving up the contest, which became continually more interesting to our ears, during the whole visit. The birds however survived it, and so did we. They perhaps flatter themselves they gained a complete victory, but I believe Mr. ——— could have killed them both in another hour. W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

DEAR SIR, *May* 3, 1780.

You indulge me in such a variety of subjects, and allow me such a latitude of excursion in this scribbling employment, that I have no excuse for silence. I am much obliged to you for swallowing such boluses as I send you, for the sake of my gilding, and verily believe that I am the only man alive, from whom they would be welcome to a palate like yours. I wish I could make them more splendid than they are, more alluring to the eye, at least, if not more pleasing to the taste; but my leaf gold is tarnished, and has received such a tinge from the vapours that are ever brooding over my mind, that I think it no small proof of your partiality to me, that you will read my letters. I am not fond of long-winded metaphors; I have always observed, that they halt at the latter end of their progress, and so do mine. I deal much in ink indeed, but not such ink as is employed by poets, and writers of essays. Mine is a harmless fluid, and guilty of no deceptions, but such as may prevail without the least injury to the person imposed on. I draw mountains, valleys, woods, and streams, and ducks, and dab-chicks. I admire them myself, and Mrs. Unwin admires them; and her praise, and my praise put together, are fame enough for me. O! I could spend whole days and moonlight nights in feeding upon a lovely prospect! My eyes drink the rivers as they flow. If every human being upon earth could think for one quarter of an hour as I have done for many years, there might perhaps be many miserable men among them, but not an unawakened one could be found, from the Arctic to the Antarctic circle. At present, the difference between them and me is greatly to their advantage. I delight in baubles, and know them to be so: for rested in, and viewed without a reference to their author, what is the earth, what are the planets, what is the sun itself but a bauble? Better for a man never to have seen them, or to see them with the eyes of a brute, stupid and unconscious of what he beholds, than not to be able to say, 'The Maker of all these wonders is my friend!' Their eyes have never been opened, to see that they are trifles; mine have been, and will be till they are closed for ever. They think a fine estate, a large conservatory, a hot-house rich as a West-Indian garden, things of consequence; visit them with pleasure, and muse upon them with ten times more. I am pleased with a frame of four lights, doubtful whether the few pines it contains will ever be worth a farthing; amuse myself with a greenhouse which lord Bute's gardener could take upon his back, and walk away with; and when I have paid it the accustomed visit, and watered it, and given it air, I say to myself—'This is not mine, 'tis a plaything lent me for the present; I must leave it soon.' W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Olney, May* 6, 1780.

I am much obliged to you for your speedy answer to my queries. I know less of the law than a country attorney, yet sometimes I think I have almost as much business. My former connexion with the profession has got wind; and though I earnestly profess, and protest, and proclaim it abroad that I know nothing of the matter, they can not be persuaded to believe, that a head once endued with a legal periwig can ever be deficient in those natural endowments it is supposed to cover. I have had the good fortune to be once or twice in the right, which, added to the cheapness of a gratuitous counsel, has advanced my credit to a degree I never expected to attain in the capacity of a lawyer. Indeed, if two of the wisest in the science of jurisprudence may give opposite opinions on the same point, which does not unfrequently happen, it seems to be a matter of indifference whether a man answers by rule or at a venture. He that stumbles upon the right side of the question is just as useful to his client as he that arrives at the same end by regular approaches, and is conducted to the mark he aims at by the greatest authorities.

* * * * * *

These violent attacks of a distemper so often fatal, are very alarming to all who esteem and respect the chancellor as he deserves. A life of confinement, and of anxious attention to important objects, where the habit is bilious to such a terrible degree, threatens to be but a short one: and I wish he may not be made a text for men of reflection to moralize upon, affording a conspicuous instance of the transient and fading nature of all human accomplishments and attainments.

Yours affectionately, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *May* 8, 1780.

My scribbling humour has of late been entirely

absorbed in the passion for landscape drawing. It it is a most amusing art, and like every other art, requires much practice and attention.

Nil sine multo
Vita labore dedit mortalibus.

Excellence is providentially placed beyond the reach of indolence, that success may be the reward of industry, and that idleness may be punished with obscurity and disgrace. So long as I am pleased with an employment, I am capable of unwearied application, because my feelings are all of the intense kind. I never received a *little* pleasure from any thing in my life; if I am delighted, it is in the extreme. The unhappy consequence of this temperature is, that my attachment to any occupation seldom outlives the novelty of it. That nerve of my imagination, that feels the touch of any particular amusement, twangs under the energy of the pressure with so much vehemence, that it soon becomes sensible of weariness and fatigue. Hence I draw an unfavourable prognostic, and expect that I shall shortly be constrained to look out for something else. Then perhaps I may string the harp again, and be able to comply with your demand.

Now for the visit you propose to pay us, and propose *not* to pay us; the hope of which plays upon your paper, like a jack-o-lantern upon the ceiling. This is no mean simile, for Virgil, (you remember) uses it. 'Tis here, 'tis there, it vanishes, it returns, it dazzles you, a cloud interposes, and it is gone. However just the comparison, I hope you will contrive to spoil it, and that your final determination will be to come. As to the masons you expect, bring them with you—bring brick, bring mortar, bring every thing that would oppose itself to your journey—all shall be welcome. I have a greenhouse that is too small, come and enlarge it; build me a pinery; repair the garden-wall, that has great need of your assistance; do any thing; you can not do too much; so far from thinking you and your train troublesome, we shall rejoice to see you, upon these or upon any other terms you can propose. But to be serious—you will do well to consider that a long summer is before you—that the party will not have such another opportunity to meet this great while; that you may finish your masonry long enough before winter, though you should not begin this month, but that you can not always find your brother and sister Powley at Olney. These, and some other considerations, such as the desire we have to see you, and the pleasure we expect from seeing you all together, may, and I think, ought to overcome your scruples.

From a general recollection of lord Clarendon's History of the Rebellion, I thought (and I remember I told you so) that there was a striking resemblance between that period and the present. But I am now reading, and have read three volumes of Hume's History, one of which is engrossed entirely by that subject. There I see reason to alter my opinion, and the seeming resemblance has disappeared upon a more particular information Charles succeeded to a long train of arbitrary princes, whose subjects had tamely acquiesced in the despotism of their masters, till their privileges were all forgot. He did but tread in their steps, and exemplify the principles in which he had been brought up, when he oppressed his people. But just at that time, unhappily for the monarch, the subject began to see, and to see that he had a right to property and freedom. This marks a sufficient difference between the disputes of that day and the present. But there was another main cause of that rebellion, which at this time does not operate at all. The king was devoted to the hierarchy; his subjects were puritans, and would not bear it. Every circumstance of ecclesiastical order and discipline was an abomination to them, and in his esteem an indispensable duty. And though at last he was obliged to give up many things, he would not abolish episcopacy, and till that were done his concessions could have no conciliating effect. These two concurring causes were indeed sufficient to set three kingdoms in a flame. But they subsist not now, nor any other, I hope, notwithstanding the bustle made by the patriots, equal to the production of such terrible events. Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO MRS. COWPER.

MY DEAR COUSIN, *May* 10, 1780.

I DO not write to comfort you: that office is not likely to be well performed by one who has no comfort for himself; nor to comply with an impertinent ceremony, which in general might well be spared upon such occasions: but because I would not seem indifferent to the concerns of those I have so much reason to esteem and love. If I did not sorrow for your brother's death, I should expect that nobody would for mine; when I knew him, he was much beloved, and I doubt not continued to be so. To live and die together is the lot of a few happy families, who hardly know what a separation means, and one sepulchre serves them all; but the ashes of our kindred are dispersed indeed. Whether the American gulf has swallowed up any other of my relations, I know not; it has made many mourners.

Believe me, my dear cousin, though after a long silence which perhaps nothing less than the present concern could have prevailed with me to interrupt, as much as ever,

Your affectionate kinsman, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *May* 10, 1780.

IF authors could have lived to adjust and authenticate their own text, a commentator would have been an useless creature. For instance—if Dr. Bentley had found, or opined that he had found, the word *tube*, where it seemed to present itself to you, and had judged the subject worthy of his critical acumen, he would either have justified the corrupt reading, or have substituted some invention of his own, in defence of which he would have exerted all his polemical abilities, and have quarreled with half the literati in Europe. Then suppose the writer himself, as in the present case, to interpose with a gentle whisper, thus——'If you look again, doctor, you will perceive that what appears to you to be *tube*, is neither more nor less than the simple monosyllable *ink*, but I wrote it in great haste, and the want of sufficient precision in the character has occasioned your mistake: *you* will be especially satisfied, when you see the sense elucidated by the explanation.'—But I question whether the doctor would quit his ground, or allow any author to be a competent judge in his own case. The world, however, would acquiesce immediately, and vote the critic useless.

James Andrews, who is my Michael Angelo, pays me many compliments on my success in the art of drawing, but I have not yet the vanity to think myself qualified to furnish your apartment. If I should ever attain to the degree of self-opinion requisite to such an undertaking, I shall labour at it with pleasure. I can only say, though I hope not with the affected modesty of the above-mentioned Dr. Bentley, who said the same thing,

Me quoque dicunt
Vatem pastores. Sed non Ego credulus illis.

A crow, rook, or raven, has built a nest in one of the young elm-trees, at the side of Mrs. Aspray's orchard. In the violent storm that blew yesterday morning, I saw it agitated to a degree that seemed to threaten its immediate destruction, and versified the following thoughts upon the occasion.*

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *June* 8, 1780.

IT is possible I might have indulged myself in the pleasure of writing to you, without waiting for a letter from you, but for a reason which you will not easily guess. Your mother communicated to me the satisfaction you expressed in my correspondence, that you thought me entertaining and clever, and so forth: now you must know, I love praise dearly, especially from the judicious, and those who have so much delicacy themselves as not to offend mine in giving it. But then, I found this consequence attending, or likely to attend the eulogium you bestowed—if my friend thought me witty before, he shall think me ten times more witty hereafter—where I joked once, I will joke five times, and for one sensible remark, I will send him a dozen. Now this foolish vanity would have spoiled me quite, and would have made me as disgusting a letter-writer as Pope, who seems to have thought that unless a sentence was well turned, and every period pointed with some conceit, it was not worth the carriage. Accordingly, he is to me, except in very few instances, the most disagreeable maker of epistles that ever I met with. I was willing, therefore, to wait till the impression your commendation had made upon the foolish part of me was worn off, that I might scribble away as usual, and write my uppermost thoughts, and those only.

You are better skilled in ecclesiastical law than I am. Mrs. P. desires me to inform her, whether a parson can be obliged to take an apprentice. For some of her husband's opposers at D——, threaten to clap one upon him. Now I think it would be rather hard, if clergymen, who are not allowed to exercise any handicraft whatever, should be subject to such an imposition. If Mr. P. was a cordwainer, or a breeches-maker, all the week, and a preacher only on Sundays, it would seem reasonable enough, in that case, that he should take an apprentice if he chose it. But even then, in my poor judgment, he ought to be left to his option. If they mean by an apprentice, a pupil, whom they will oblige him to hew into a parson, and after chipping away the block that hides the minister within, to qualify him to stand erect in a pulpit—that indeed is another consideration—But still we live in a free country, and I can not bring myself even to suspect that an English divine can possibly be liable to such compulsion. Ask your uncle, however, for he is wiser in these things than either of us.

I thank you for your two inscriptions, and like the last the best; the thought is just and fine—but the two last lines are sadly damaged by the monkish jingle of *peperit* and *reperit*. I have not yet translated them, nor do I promise to do it, though at some idle hour perhaps I may. In return, I send you a translation of a simile in the Paradise Lost. Not having that poem at hand, I can not refer you to the book and page, but you may hunt for it, if you think it worth your while. —It begins—

'So when, from mountain tops, the dusky clouds
Ascending, &c.'

* Cowper's Fable of the Raven concluded this letter.

* For the translation of this simile, see Cowper's Poems.

If you spy any fault in my Latin, tell me, for I am sometimes in doubt; but, as I told you when you was here, I have not a Latin book in the world to consult, or correct a mistake by; and some years have passed since I was a school-boy.

An English Versification of a Thought that popped into my Head two Months since.

Sweet stream!* &c.

Now this is not so exclusively applicable to a maiden, as to be the sole property of your sister Shuttleworth. If you look at Mrs. Unwin, you will see that she has not lost her right to this just praise by marrying you.

Your mother sends her love to all and mine comes jogging along by the side of it.

Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

DEAR SIR, *June* 12, 1780.

We accept it as an effort of your friendship, that you could prevail with yourself, in a time of such terror and distress, to send us repeated accounts of yours and Mrs. Newton's welfare; you supposed, with reason enough, that we should be apprehensive for your safety, situated as you were, apparently, within the reach of so much danger. We rejoice that you have escaped at all, and that, except the anxiety which you must have felt, both for yourselves and others, you have suffered nothing upon this dreadful occasion. A metropolis in flames, and a nation in ruins, are subjects of contemplation for such a mind as yours as will leave a lasting impression behind them. It is well that the design died in the execution, and will be buried, I hope never to rise again, in the ashes of its own combustion. There is a melancholy pleasure in looking back upon such a scene, arising from a comparison of possibilities with facts; the enormous bulk of the intended mischief with the abortive and partial accomplishment of it; much was done, more indeed than could have been supposed practicable in a well-regulated city, not unfurnished with a military force for its protection. But surprise and astonishment seem at first to have struck every nerve of the police with a palsy; and to have disarmed government of all its powers.

I congratulate you upon the wisdom that withheld you from entering yourself a member of the Protestant association. Your friends who did so have reason enough to regret their doing it, even though they should never be called upon. Innocent as they are, and they who know them can not doubt of their being perfectly so, it is likely to bring an odium on the profession they make, that will not soon be forgotten. Neither is it possible for a quiet, inoffensive man, to discover, on a sudden, that his zeal has carried him into such company, without being to the last degree shocked at his imprudence. *Their* religion was an honourable mantle, like that of Elijah; but the majority wore cloaks of Guy Fawkes's time, and meant nothing so little as what they pretended.

W. C.

* Vide Poems.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

June 18, 1780.

REVEREND AND DEAR WILLIAM,

The affairs of kingdoms, and the concerns of individuals, are variegated alike with the checker-work of joy and sorrow. The news of a great acquisition in America has succeeded to terrible tumults in London; and the beams of prosperity are now playing upon the smoke of that conflagration which so lately terrified the whole land. These sudden changes, which are matter of every man's observation, and may therefore always be reasonably expected, serve to hold up the chin of despondency above water, and preserve mankind in general from the sin and misery of accounting existence a burden not to be endured—an evil we should be sure to encounter, if we were not warranted to look for a bright reverse of our most afflictive experiences. The Spaniards were sick of the war at the very commencement of it; and I hope that, by this time, the French themselves begin to find themselves a little indisposed, if not desirous of peace, which that restless and meddling temper of theirs is incapable of desiring for its own sake. But is it true, that this detestable plot was an egg laid in France, and hatched in London, under the influence of French corruption?—*Nam te scire, deos quoniam propius contingis, oportet.* The offspring has the features of such a parent, and yet, without the clearest proof of the fact, I would not willingly charge upon a civilized nation what perhaps the most barbarous would abhor the thought of. I no sooner saw the surmise however in the paper, than I immediately began to write Latin verses upon the occasion. 'An odd effect,' you will say, 'of such a circumstance:'—but an effect, nevertheless, that whatever has, at any time, moved my passions, whether pleasantly or otherwise, has always had upon me: were I to express what I feel upon such occasions in prose, it would be verbose, inflated, and disgusting. I therefore have recourse to verse, as a suitable vehicle for the most vehement expressions my thoughts suggest to me. What I have written, I did not write so much for the comfort of the English, as for the mortification of the

French. You will immediately perceive therefore that I have been labouring in vain, and that this bouncing explosion is likely to spend itself in the air. For I have no means of circulating what follows, through all the French territories: and unless that or something like it, can be done, my indignation will be entirely fruitless. Tell me how I can convey it into Sartine's pocket, or who will lay it upon his desk for me. But read it first, and unless you think it pointed enough to sting the Gaul to the quick, burn it.

In seditionem horrendam, corruptelis Gallicis, ut fertur, Londini nuper exortam.

Perfida, crudelis, victa et lymphata furore,
Non armis, laurum Gallia fraude petit.
Venalem pretio plebem condusit, et urit
Undique privatas patriciasque domos.
Nequicquam conata sua, fœdissima sperat
Posse tamen nostra nos superare manu.
Gallia, vana struis! Precibus nunc utere! Vinces,
Nam mites timidis, supplicibusque sumus.

I have lately exercised my ingenuity in contriving an exercise for yours, and have composed a riddle, which, if it does not make you laugh before you have solved it, will probably do it afterwards. I would transcribe it now, but am really so fatigued with writing, that unless I knew you had a quinsy, and that a fit of laughter might possibly save your life, I could not prevail with myself to do it.

What could you possibly mean, slender as you are, by sallying out upon your two walking sticks at two in the morning, into the midst of such a tumult? We admire your prowess, but can not commend your prudence.

Our love attends you all, collectively and individually.

Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *June* 22, 1780.

A word or two in answer to two or three questions of yours, which I have hitherto taken no notice of. I am not in a scribbling mood, and shall therefore make no excursions to amuse either myself or you. The needful will be as much as I can manage at present—the playful must wait for another opportunity.

I thank you for your offer of Robertson; but I have more reading upon my hands at this present writing than I shall get rid of in a twelve-month; and this moment recollect that I have seen it already. He is an author that I admire much; with one exception, that I think his style is too laboured. Hume, as an historian, pleases me more.

I have just read enough of the *Biographia Britannica* to say, that I have tasted it, and have no doubt but I shall like it. I am pretty much in the garden at this season of the year, so read but little. In summer-time I am as giddy-headed as a boy, and can settle to nothing. Winter condenses me, and makes me lumpish, and sober; and then I can read all day long.

For the same reasons, I have no need of the landscapes at present; when I want them I will renew my application, and repeat the description, but it will hardly be before October.

Before I rose this morning, I composed the three following stanzas; I send them because I like them pretty well myself; and if you should not, you must accept this handsome compliment as an amends for their deficiencies. You may print the lines, if you judge them worth it.*

I have only time to add love, &c., and my two initials. W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *June* 23, 1780.

Your reflections upon the state of London, the sins and enormities of that great city, while you had a distant view of it from Greenwich, seem to have been prophetic of the heavy stroke that fell upon it just after. Man often prophesies without knowing it; a spirit speaks by him which is not his own, though he does not at that time suspect that he is under the influence of any other. Did he foresee what is always foreseen by him who dictates what he supposes to be his own, he would suffer by antieipation, as well as by consequence; and wish perhaps as ardently for the happy ignorance, to which he is at present so much indebted, as some have foolishly and inconsiderately done for a knowledge that would be but another name for misery.

And why have I said all this? especially to you, who have hitherto said it to me—not because I had the least desire of informing a wiser man than myself, but because the observation was naturally suggested by the recollection of your letter, and that letter, though not the last, happened to be uppermost in my mind. I can compare this mind of mine to nothing that resembles it more, than to a board that is under the carpenter's plane (I mean while I am writing to you,) the shavings are my uppermost thoughts; after a few strokes of the tool, it acquires a new surface; this again, upon a repetition of his task, he takes off, and a new surface still succeeds—whether the shavings of the present day will be worth your acceptance, I know not, I am unfortunately made neither of cedar nor of mahogany; but *Truncus ficuinus, inutile*

* Verses on the burning of Lord Mansfield's Library, &c.

lignum—consequently, though I should be planed till I am as thin as a wafer, it will be but rubbish to the last.

It is not strange that you should be the subject of a false report; for the sword of slander, like that of war, devours one as well as another; and a blameless character is particularly delicious to its unsparing appetite. But that you should be the object of such a report, you who meddle less with the designs of government than almost any man that lives under it, this is strange indeed. It is well, however, when they who account it good sport to traduce the reputation of another, invent a story that refutes itself. I wonder they do not always endeavour to accommodate their fiction to the real character of the person; their tale would then at least have an air of probability, and it might cost a peaceable good man much more trouble to disprove it. But perhaps it would not be easy to discern what part of your conduct lies more open to such an attempt than another; or what it is that you either say or do, at any time, that presents a fair opportunity to the most ingenious slanderer, to slip in a falsehood between your words, or actions, that shall seem to be of a piece with either. You hate compliment, I know; but by your leave this is not one—it is a truth—worse and worse—now I have praised you indeed—well, you must thank yourself for it; it was absolutely done without the least intention on my part, and proceeded from a pen that, as far as I can remember, was never guilty of flattery since I knew how to hold it. He that slanders me, paints me blacker than I am, and he that flatters me, whiter—they both daub me; and when I look in the glass of conscience, I see myself disguised by both—I had as lief my tailor should sew gingerbread nuts on my coat instead of buttons, as that any man should call my Bristol stone a diamond. The tailor's trick would not at all embellish my suit, nor the flatterer's make me at all the richer. I never make a present to my friend of what I dislike myself. Ergo (I have reached the conclusion at last,) I did not mean to flatter you.

We have sent a petition to lord Dartmouth, by this post, praying him to interfere in parliament in behalf of the poor lace-makers. I say we, because I have signed it; Mr. G. drew it up, Mr. ———— did not think it grammatical, therefore he would not sign it. Yet I think Priscian himself would have pardoned the manner for the sake of the matter. I dare say if his lordship does not comply with the prayer of it, it will not be because he thinks it of more consequence to write grammatically, than that the poor should eat, but for some better reason.

My love to all under your roof.

Yours, W. C

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

July 2, 1780.

Carissime, I am glad of your confidence, and have reason to hope I shall never abuse it. If you trust me with a secret, I am hermetically sealed; and if you call for the exercise of my judgment, such as it is, I am never freakish or wanton in the use of it, much less mischievous and malignant. Critics, I believe, do not often stand so clear of these vices as I do. I like your epitaph, except that I doubt the propriety of the word *immaturus;* which, I think, is rather applicable to fruits than flowers; and except the last pentameter, the assertion it contains being rather too obvious a thought to finish with; not that I think an epitaph should be pointed like an epigram. But still there is a closeness of thought and expression necessary in the conclusion of all these little things, that they may leave an agreeable flavour upon the palate. Whatever is short, should be nervous, masculine, and compact. Little men are so; and little poems should be so; because, where the work is short, the author has no right to the plea of weariness; and laziness is never admitted as an available excuse in any thing. Now you know my opinion, you will very likely improve upon my improvement, and alter my alterations for the better. To touch and retouch is, though some writers boast of negligence, and others would be ashamed to show their foul copies, the secret of almost all good writing, especially in verse. I am never weary of it myself; and if you would take as much pains as I do, you would have no need to ask for my corrections.

Hic sepultus est
Inter suorum lacrymas
GULIELMUS NORTHCOT,
Gulielmi et Mariæ filius
Unicus, unice dilectus,
Qui floris ritu succisus est semihiantis,
Aprilis die septimo,
1780. Æt. 10.

Care vale! Sed non æternum, care, valeto!
Namque iterum tecum, sim modo dignus ero:
Tum nihil amplexus poterit divellere nostros,
Nec tu marcesces, nec lacrymabor ego.

Having an English translation of it by me, I send it, though it may be of no use.

Farewell! "but not forever," Hope replies,
"Trace but his steps, and meet him in the skies!"
There nothing shall renew our parting pain,
Thou shalt not wither, nor I weep again!

The stanzas that I sent you are maiden ones, having never been seen by any eye but your mother's and your own.

If you send me franks, I shall write long letters—*Valete, sicut et nos valemus! Amate, sicut et nos amamus.*

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MON AMI, *July* 8, 1780.

If you ever take the tip of the chancellor's ear between your finger and thumb, you can hardly improve the opportunity to better purpose, than if you should whisper into it the voice of compassion and lenity to the lace-makers. I am an eye-witness of their poverty, and do know that hundreds in this little town are upon the point of starving, and that the most unremitting industry is but barely sufficient to keep them from it. I know that the bill by which they would have been so fatally affected is thrown out: but lord Stormont threatens them with another; and if another like it should pass, they are undone. We lately sent a petition from hence to lord Dartmouth; I signed it, and am sure the contents are true. The purport of it was to inform him that there are very near one thousand two hundred lace-makers in this beggarly town, the most of whom had reason enough, while the bill was in agitation, to look upon every loaf they bought as the last they should ever be able to earn. I can never think it good policy to incur the certain inconvenience of ruining thirty thousand, in order to prevent a remote and possible damage though to a much greater number. The measure is like a scythe, and the poor lace-makers are the sickly crop that trembles before the edge of it. The prospect of peace with America is like the streak of dawn in their horizon; but this bill is like a black cloud behind it, that threatens their hope of a comfortable day with utter extinction.

I did not perceive, till this moment, that I had tacked two similes together; a practice which, though warranted by the example of Homer, and allowable in an epic poem, is rather luxuriant and licentious in a letter; lest I should add another, I conclude. W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

July 11, 1780.

I account myself sufficiently commended for my Latin exercise, by the number of translations it has undergone. That which you distinguished in the margin by the title of "better," was the production of a friend; and, except that for a modest reason he omitted the third couplet, I think it a good one. To finish the group, I have translated it myself; and though I would not wish you to give it to the world, for more reasons than one, especially lest some French hero should call me to account for it—I add it on the other side. An author ought to be the best judge of his own meaning; and whether I have succeeded or not, I can not but wish, that where a translator is wanted, the writer was always to be his own.

False, cruel, disappointed, stung to the heart,
France quits the warrior's for the assassin's part;
To dirty hands, a dirty bride conveys,
Bids the low street and lofty palace blaze.
Her sons too weak to vanquish us alone,
She hires the worst and basest of our own,
Kneel, France! a suppliant conquers us with ease,
We always spare a coward on his knees.

I have often wondered that Dryden's illustrious epigram on Milton (in my mind the second best that ever was made) has never been translated into Latin, for the admiration of the learned in other countries. I have at last presumed to venture upon the task myself. The great closeness of the original, which is equal in that respect to the most compact Latin I ever saw, made it extremely difficult.

Tres, tria, &c.*

I have not one bright thought upon the chancellor's recovery; nor can I strike off so much as one sparkling atom from that brilliant subject. It is not when I will, nor upon what I will, but as a thought happens to occur to me; and then I versify, whether I will or not. I never write but for my amusement; and what I write is sure to answer that end, if it answers no other. If, besides this purpose, the more desirable one of entertaining you be effected, I then receive double fruit of my labour, and consider this produce of it as a second crop, the more valuable, because less expected. But when I have once remitted a composition to you, I have done with it. It is pretty certain that I shall never read it or think of it again. From that moment I have constituted you sole judge of its accomplishments, if it has any, and of its defects, which it is sure to have.

For this reason I decline answering the question with which you concluded your last, and can not persuade myself to enter into a critical examen of the two pieces upon lord Mansfield's loss, either with respect to their intrinsic or comparative merit; and indeed after having rather discouraged that use of them which you had designed, there is no occasion for it. W. C.

TO MRS. COWPER.

MY DEAR COUSIN, *July* 20, 1780.

Mr. Newton having desired me to be of the party, I am come to meet him. You see me sixteen

* Vid. Poems.

years older at the least, than when I saw you last; but the effects of time seem to have taken place rather on the outside of my head, than within it. What was brown is become gray, but what was foolish, remains foolish still. Green fruit must rot before it ripens, if the season is such as to afford it nothing but cold winds and dark clouds, that interrupt every ray of sunshine. My days steal away silently, and march on (as poor mad King Lear would have made his soldiers march) as if they were shod with felt; not so silently but that I hear them; yet were it not that I am always listening to their flight, having no infirmity that I had not when I was much younger, I should deceive myself with an imagination that I am still young.

I am fond of writing as an amusement, but do not always find it one. Being rather scantily furnished with subjects that are good for any thing, and corresponding only with those who have no relish for such as are good for nothing, I often find myself reduced to the necessity, the disagreeable necessity, of writing about myself. This does not mend the matter much; for though in a description of my own condition, I discover abundant materials to employ my pen upon, yet as the task is not very agreeable to *me*, so I am sufficiently aware that it is likely to prove irksome to others. A painter who should confine himself in the exercise of his art to the drawing of his own picture, must be a wonderful coxcomb, if he did not soon grow sick of his occupation; and be peculiarly fortunate, if he did not make others as sick as himself.

Remote as your dwelling is from the late scene of riot and confusion, I hope that though you could not but hear the report, you heard no more, and that the roarings of the mad multitude did not reach you. That was a day of terror to the innocent, and the present is a day of still greater terror to the guilty. The law was for a few moments like an arrow in the quiver, seemed to be of no use, and did no execution; now it is an arrow upon the string, and many, who despised it lately, are trembling as they stand before the point of it.

I have talked more already than I have formerly done in three visits—you remember my taciturnity, never to be forgotten by those who knew me; not to depart entirely from what might be, for aught I know, the most shining part of my character—I here shut my mouth, make my bow, and return to Olney. W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *July* 27, 1780.

As two men sit silent, after having exhausted all their topics of conversation: one says—'It is very fine weather,'—and the other says—'Yes;'—one blows his nose, and the other rubs his eyebrows; (by the way this is very much in Homer's manner) such seems to be the case between you and me. After a silence of some days I write you a long something, that (I suppose) was nothing to the purpose, because it has not afforded you materials for an answer. Nevertheless, as it often happens in the case above-stated, one of the distressed parties, being deeply sensible of the awkwardness of a dumb duet, breaks silence again, and resolves to speak, though he has nothing to say. So it fares with me, I am with you again in the form of an epistle, though, considering my present emptiness, I have reason to fear that your only joy upon the occasion will be, that it is conveyed to you in a frank.

When I began, I expected no interruption. But if I had expected interruptions without end, I should have been less disappointed. First came the barber; who, after having embellished the outside of my head, has left the inside just as unfurnished as he found it. Then came Olney bridge, not into the house, but into the conversation. The cause relating to it was tried on Tuesday at Buckingham. The judge directed the jury to find a verdict favourable to Olney. The jury consisted of one knave and eleven fools. The last-mentioned followed the afore-mentioned, as sheep follow a bell-wether, and decided in direct opposition to the said judge. Then a flaw was discovered in the indictment. The indictment was quashed, and an order made for a new trial. The new trial will be in the King's Bench, where said knave and said fools will have nothing to do with it. So the men of Olney fling up their caps, and assure themselves of a complete victory. A victory will save me and your mother many shillings, perhaps some pounds, which, except that it has afforded me a subject to write upon, was the only reason why I said so much about it. I know you take an interest in all that concerns us, and will consequently rejoice with us in the prospect of an event in which we are concerned so nearly. Yours affectionately, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR SIR, *July* 30, 1780.

You may think perhaps that I deal more liberally with Mr. Unwin, in the way of poetical export, than I do with you, and I believe you have reason—the truth is this—if I walked the streets with a fiddle under my arm, I should never think of performing before the window of a privy counsellor, or a chief justice, but should rather make free with ears more likely to be open to such amusement.—The trifles I produce in this way are indeed such trifles, that I can not think them seasonable presents for you. Mr. Unwin himself would not be

offended if I was to tell him that there is this difference between him and Mr. Newton; that the latter is already an apostle, while he himself is only undergoing the business of an incubation, with a hope that he may be hatched in time. When my muse comes forth arrayed in sables, at least in a robe of graver cast, I make no scruple to direct her to my friend at Hoxton. This has been one reason why I have so long delayed the riddle. But lest I should seem to set a value upon it, that I do not, by making it an object of still further inquiry, here it comes.

I am just two and two, I am warm, I am cold,
And the parent of numbers that can not be told,
I am lawful, unlawful—a duty, a fault,
I am often sold dear, good for nothing when bought,
An extraordinary boon, and a matter of course,
And yielded with pleasure—when taken by force.

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *August* 6, 1780.

You like to hear from me—This is a very good reason why I should write—But I have nothing to say—This seems equally a good reason why I should not.—Yet if you had alighted from your horse at our door this morning, and at this present writing being five o'clock in the afternoon, had found occasion to say to me—'Mr. Cowper, you have not spoke since I came in, have you resolved never to speak again?' it would be but a poor reply, if in answer to the summons I should plead inability as my best and only excuse. And this by the way suggests to me a seasonable piece of instruction, and reminds me of what I am very apt to forget, when I have any epistolary business in hand, that a letter may be written upon any thing or nothing just as that any thing or nothing happens to occur. A man that has a journey before him twenty miles in length, which he is to perform on foot, will not hesitate and doubt whether he shall set out or not, because he does not readily conceive how he shall ever reach the end of it; for he knows, that by the simple operation of moving one foot forward first, and then the other, he shall be sure to accomplish it. So it is in the present case, and so it is in every similar case. A letter is written as a conversation is maintained, or a journey performed, not by preconcerted or premeditated means, a new contrivance, or an invention never heard of before, but merely by maintaining a progress, and resolving as a postillion does, having once set out, never to stop till we reach the appointed end. If a man may talk without thinking, why may he not write upon the same terms? A grave gentleman of the last century, a tie-wig, square-toe, Steinkirk figure, would say, —'My good sir, a man has no right to do either.' But it is to be hoped that the present century has nothing to do with the mouldy opinions of the last, and so good Sir Launcelot, or Sir Paul, or whatever be your name, step into your picture frame again, and look as if you thought for another century, and leave us moderns in the mean time to think when we can, and to write whether we can or not, else we might as well be dead as you are.

When we look back upon our forefathers, we seem to look back upon the people of another nation, almost upon creatures of another species. Their vast rambling mansions, spacious halls, and painted casements, the gothic porch smothered with honeysuckles, their little gardens and high walls, their box-edgings, balls of holly, and yew-tree statues, are become so entirely unfashionable now, that we can hardly believe it possible, that a people who resembled us so little in their taste, should resemble us in any thing else. But in every thing else, I suppose, they were our counterparts exactly; and time, that has sewed up the slashed sleeve, and reduced the large trunk hose to a neat pair of silk stockings, has left human nature just where it found it. The inside of the man at least has undergone no change. His passions, appetites, and aims are just what they ever were. They wear perhaps a handsomer disguise than they did in days of yore: for philosophy and literature will have their effect upon the exterior; but in every other respect a modern is only an ancient in a different dress.

W. C

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

August 21, 1780.

The following occurrence ought not to be passed over in silence, in a place where so few notable ones are to be met with. Last Wednesday night, while we were at supper, between the hours of eight and nine, I heard an unusual noise in the back parlour, as if one of the hares was entangled, and endeavouring to disengage herself. I was just going to rise from table, when it ceased. In about five minutes, a voice on the outside of the parlour door inquired if one of my hares had got away. I immediately rushed into the next room, and found that my poor favourite Puss had made her escape. She had gnawed in sunder the strings of a lattice work, with which I thought I had sufficiently secured the window, and which I preferred to any other sort of blind, because it admitted plenty of air. From thence I hastened to the kitchen, where I saw the redoubtable Thomas Freeman, who told me, that having seen her, just after she had dropped into the street, he attempted to cover her with his hat, but she screamed out, and leaped directly over his head. I then desired him to pursue as fast

as possible, and added Richard Coleman to the chase, as being nimbler, and carrying less weight than Thomas; not expecting to see her again, but desirous to learn, if possible, what became of her. In something less than an hour, Richard returned, almost breathless, with the following account. That soon after he began to run, he left Tom behind him, and came in sight of a most numerous hunt, of men, women, children, and dogs; that he did his best to keep back the dogs, and presently outstripped the crowd, so that the race was at last disputed between himself and Puss—she ran right through the town, and down the lane that leads to Dropshort—a little before she came to the house, he got the start and turned her; she pushed for the town again, and soon after she entered it sought shelter in Mr. Wagstaff's tan-yard, adjoining to old Mr. Drake's—Sturge's harvest men were at supper, and saw her from the opposite side of the way. There she encountered the tan-pits full of water; and while she was struggling out of one pit, and plunging into another, and almost drowned, one of the men drew her out by the ears and secured her. She was then well washed in a bucket, to get the lime out of her coat, and brought home in a sack at ten o'clock.

This frolic cost us four shillings, but you may believe we did not grudge a farthing of it. The poor creature received only a little hurt in one of her claws, and in one of her ears, and is now almost as well as ever.

I do not call this an answer to your letter, but such as it is I send it, presuming upon that interest which I know you take in my minutest concerns, which I can not express better than in the words of Terence a little varied—*Nihil mei a te alienum putas.* Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO MRS. COWPER.

MY DEAR COUSIN, *August* 31, 1780.

I AM obliged to you for your long letter, which did not seem so, and for your short one, which was more than I had any reason to expect. Short as it was, it conveyed to me two interesting articles of intelligence. An account of your recovering from a fever, and of lady Cowper's death. The latter was, I suppose, to be expected, for by what remembrance I have of her ladyship, who was never much acquainted with her, she had reached those years that are always found upon the borders of another world. As for you, your time of life is comparatively of a youthful date. You may think of death as much as you please (you can not think of it too much), but I hope you will live to think of it many years.

It costs me not much difficulty to suppose that my friends who were already grown old, when I saw them last, are old still; but it costs me a good deal sometimes to think of those who were at that time young, as being older than they were. Not having been an eyewitness of the change that time has made in them, and my former idea of them not being corrected by observation, it remains the same; my memory presents me with this image unimpaired, and while it retains the resemblance of what they were, forgets that by this time the picture may have lost much of its likeness, through the alteration that succeeding years have made in the original. I know not what impressions Time may have made upon your person, for while his claws (as our grannams called them) strike deep furrows in some faces, he seems to sheathe them with much tenderness, as if fearful of doing injury to others. But though an enemy to the person, he is a friend to the mind, and you have found him so. Though even in this respect his treatment of us depends upon what he meets with at our hands; if we use him well, and listen to his admonitions, he is a friend indeed, but otherwise the worst of enemies, who takes from us daily something that we valued, and gives us nothing better in its stead. It is well with them who, like you, can stand a tiptoe on the mountain top of human life, look down with pleasure upon the valley they have passed, and sometimes stretch their wings in joyful hope of a happy flight into eternity. Yet a little while and your hope will be accomplished.

When you can favour me with a little account of your own family, without inconvenience, I shall be glad to receive it; for though separated from my kindred by little more than half a century of miles, I know as little of their concerns as if oceans and continents were interposed between us.

Yours, my dear cousin, W C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Sept.* 3, 1780.

I AM glad you are so provident, and that, while you are young, you have furnished yourself with the means of comfort in old age. Your crutch and your pipe may be of use to you, (and may they be so) should your years be extended to an antediluvian date; and for your perfect accommodation, you seem to want nothing but a clerk called Snuffle, and a sexton of the name of Skeleton, to make your ministerial equipage complete.

I think I have read as much of the first volume of the Biographia as I shall ever read. I find it very amusing; more so perhaps than it would have been had they sifted their characters with more exactness, and admitted none but those who had in some way or other entitled themselves to immortality, by deserving well of the public. Such

a compilation would perhaps have been more judicious, though I confess it would have afforded less variety. The priests and monks of earlier, and the doctors of later days, who have signalized themselves by nothing but a controversial pamphlet, long since thrown by, and never to be perused again, might have been forgotten without injury or loss to the national character for learning or genius. This observation suggested to me the following lines, which may serve to illustrate my meaning, and at the same time to give my criticism a sprightlier air.

Oh fond attempts, &c.*

Virgil admits none but worthies into the Elysian Fields; I can not recollect the lines in which he describes them all, but these in particular I well remember—

Quique sui memores alios fecere merendo,
Inventas aut qui vitam excoluere per artes.

A chaste and scrupulous conduct like his would well become the writer of national biography.—But enough of this.

Our respects attend Miss Shuttleworth, with many thanks for her intended present. Some purses derive all their value from their contents, but these will have an intrinsic value of their own: and though mine should be often empty, which is not an improbable supposition, I shall still esteem it highly on its own account.

If you could meet with a second-hand Virgil, ditto Homer, both Iliad and Odyssey, together with a Clavis, for I have no Lexicon, and all tolerably cheap, I shall be obliged to you if you will make the purchase. Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

My dear friend, *Sept.* 7, 1780.

As many gentlemen as there are in the world, who have children, and heads capable of reflecting on the important subject of their education, so many opinions there are about it; many of them just and sensible, though almost all differing from each other. With respect to the education of boys, I think they are generally made to draw in Latin and Greek trammels too soon. It is pleasing, no doubt, to a parent to see his child already in some sort a proficient in those languages, at an age when most others are entirely ignorant of them; but hence it often happens, that a boy, who could construe a fable of Æsop at six or seven years of age, having exhausted his little stock of attention and diligence in making that noble acquisition, grows weary of his task, conceives a dislike for study, and perhaps makes but a very indifferent progress afterwards. The mind and body have in this respect a striking resemblance of each other. In childhood, they are both nimble, but not strong; they can skip and frisk about with wonderful agility, but hard labour spoils them both. In maturer years they become less active, but more vigorous, more capable of a fixed application, and can make themselves sport with that which a little earlier would have affected them with intolerable fatigue. I should recommend it to you therefore (but after all you must judge for yourself) to allot the two next years of little John's scholarship to writing and arithmetic, together with which, for variety's sake, and because it is capable of being formed into an amusement, I would mingle geography, a science (which, if not attended to betimes, is seldom made an object of much consideration) essentially necessary to the accomplishment of a gentleman, yet (as I know by sad experience) imperfectly, if at all, inculcated in the schools. Lord Spenser's son, when he was four years of age, knew the situation of every kingdom, country, city, river, and remarkable mountain in the world. For this attainment, which I suppose his father had never made, he was indebted to a plaything; having been accustomed to amuse himself with those maps which are cut into several compartments, so as to be thrown into a heap of confusion, that they may be put together again with an exact coincidence of all their angles and bearings, so as to form a perfect whole.

If he begins Latin and Greek at eight, or even at nine years of age, it is surely soon enough. Seven years, the usual allowance for those acquisitions, are more than sufficient for the purpose, especially with his readiness in learning; for you would hardly wish to have him qualified for the university before fifteen, a period, in my mind, much too early for it, and when he could hardly be trusted there without the utmost danger to his morals. Upon the whole, you will perceive that in my judgment the difficulty, as well as the wisdom, consists more in bridling in, and keeping back, a boy of his parts, than in pushing him forward. If therefore at the end of the two next years, instead of putting a grammar into his hand, you should allow him to amuse himself with some agreeable writers upon the subject of natural philosophy for another year, I think it would answer well. There is a book called Cosmotheoria Puerilis, there are Derham's Physico, and Astrotheology, together with several others in the same manner, very intelligible even to a child, and full of useful instruction. W. C.

* Verses 'On observing some Names of little Note recorded in the Biographia Britannica.'

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Sept.* 17, 1780.

You desire my further thoughts on the subject of education. I send you such as had for the most part occurred to me when I wrote last, but could not be comprised in a single letter. They are indeed on a different branch of this interesting theme, but not less important than the former.

I think it your happiness, and wish you to think it so yourself, that you are in every respect qualified for the task of instructing your son, and preparing him for the university, without committing him to the care of a stranger. In my judgment, a domestic education deserves the preference to a public one on a hundred accounts, which I have neither time nor room to mention. I shall only touch upon two or three that I can not but consider as having a right to your most earnest attention.

In a public school, or indeed in any school, his morals are sure to be but little attended to, and his religion not at all. If he can catch the love of virtue from the fine things that are spoken of it in the classics, and the love of holiness from the customary attendance upon such preaching as he is likely to hear, it will be well; but I am sure you have had too many opportunities to observe the inefficacy of such means, to expect any such advantage from them. In the mean time, the more powerful influence of bad example, and perhaps bad company, will continually counterwork these only preservatives he can meet with, and may possibly send him home to you, at the end of five or six years, such as you will be sorry to see him. You escaped indeed the contagion yourself; but a few instances of happy exemption from a general malady are not sufficient warrant to conclude, that it is therefore not infectious, or may be encountered without danger.

You have seen too much of the world, and are a man of too much reflection, not to have observed that in proportion as the sons of a family approach to years of maturity, they lose a sense of obligation to their parents, and seem at last almost divested of that tender affection which the nearest of all relations seems to demand from them. I have often observed it myself, and have always thought I could sufficiently account for it, without laying all the blame upon the children. While they continue in their parents' house, they are every day obliged, and every day reminded how much it is their interest, as well as duty, to be obliging and affectionate in return. But at eight or nine years of age the boy goes to school. From that moment he becomes a stranger in his father's house. The course of parental kindness is interrupted. The smiles of his mother, those tender admonitions, and the solicitous care of both his parents, are no longer before his eyes—year after year he feels himself more and more detached from them, till at last he is so effectually weaned from the connexion, as to find himself happier any where than in their company.

I should have been glad of a frank for this letter, for I have said but little of what I could say upon this subject, and perhaps I may not be able to catch it by the end again. If I can, I shall add to it hereafter. Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Oct.* 5, 1780.

Now for the sequel—you have anticipated one of my arguments in favour of a private education, therefore I need say but little about it. The folly of supposing that the mother-tongue, in some respects the most difficult of all tongues, may be acquired without a teacher, is predominant in all the public schools that I have ever heard of. To pronounce it well, to speak and to write it with fluency and elegance, are no easy attainments; not one in fifty of those who pass through Westminster and Eton, arrive at any remarkable proficiency in these accomplishments; and they that do are more indebted to their own study and application for it, than to any instruction received there. In general, there is nothing so pedantic as the style of a schoolboy, if he aims at any style at all; and if he does not, he is of course inelegant, and perhaps ungrammatical. A defect, no doubt, in great measure owing to want of cultivation; for the same lad that is often commended for his Latin, frequently would deserve to be whipped for his English, if the fault were not more the master's than his own. I know not where this evil is so likely to be prevented as at home—supposing always, nevertheless, (which is the case in your instance) that the boy's parents, and their acquaintance, are persons of elegance and taste themselves. For to converse with those who converse with propriety, and to be directed to such authors as have refined and improved the language by their productions, are advantages which he can not elsewhere enjoy in an equal degree. And though it requires some time to regulate the taste, and fix the judgment, and these effects must be gradually wrought even upon the best understanding, yet I suppose much less time will be necessary for the purpose than could at first be imagined, because the opportunities of improvement are continual.

A public education is often recommended as the most effectual remedy for that bashful and awkward restraint, so epidemical among the youth of our country. But I verily believe that instead of being a cure, it is often the cause of it. For seven

or eight years of his life, the boy has hardly seen or conversed with a man, or a woman, except the maids at his boarding-house. A gentleman or a lady are consequently such novelties to him, that he is perfectly at a loss to know what sort of behaviour he should preserve before them. He plays with his buttons, or the strings of his hat, he blows his nose, and hangs down his head, is conscious of his own deficiency to a degree that makes him quite unhappy, and trembles lest any one should speak to him, because that would quite overwhelm him. Is not all this miserable shyness the effect of his education? To me it appears to be so. If he saw good company every day, he would never be terrified at the sight of it, and a room full of ladies and gentlemen would alarm him no more than the chairs they sit on. Such is the effect of custom.

I need add nothing further on this subject, because I believe little John is as likely to be exempted from this weakness as most young gentlemen we shall meet with. He seems to have his father's spirit in this respect, in whom I could never discern the least trace of bashfulness, though I have often heard him complain of it. Under your management, and the influence of your example, I think he can hardly fail to escape it. If he does, he escapes that which has made many a man uncomfortable for life; and ruined not a few, by forcing them into mean and dishonourable company, where only they could be free and cheerful.

Connexions formed at school are said to be lasting, and often beneficial. There are two or three stories of this kind upon record, which would not be so constantly cited as they are, whenever this subject happens to be mentioned, if the chronicle that preserves their remembrance had many besides to boast of. For my own part, I found such friendships, though warm enough in their commencement, surprisingly liable to extinction; and of seven or eight, whom I had selected for intimates out of about three hundred, in ten years time not one was left me. The truth is, that there may be, and often is, an attachment of one boy to another, that looks very like a friendship; and while they are in circumstances that enable them mutually to oblige and to assist each other, promises well, and bids fair to be lasting. But they are no sooner separated from each other, by entering into the world at large, than other connexions, and new employments, in which they no longer share together, efface the remembrance of what passed in earlier days, and they become strangers to each other for ever. Add to this, that the *man* frequently differs so much from the *boy;* his principles, manners, temper, and conduct, undergo so great an alteration, that we no longer recognise in him our old playfellow, but find him utterly unworthy and unfit for the place he once held in our affections.

To close this article, as I did the last, by applying myself immediately to the present concern —— little John is happily placed above all occasion for dependence on all such precarious hopes, and need not be sent to school in quest of some great men in embryo, who may possibly make his fortune.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO MRS. NEWTON.

DEAR MADAM, *Oct.* 5, 1780.

WHEN a lady speaks, it is not civil to make her wait a week for an answer—I received your letter within this hour, and, foreseeing that the garden will engross much of my time for some days to come, have seized the present opportunity to acknowledge it. I congratulate you on Mr. Newton's safe arrival at Ramsgate, making no doubt but that he reached that place without difficulty or danger, the road thither from Canterbury being so good as to afford room for neither. He has now had a view of the element, with which he was once so familiar, but which I think he has not seen for many years. The sight of his old acquaintance will revive in his mind a pleasing recollection of past deliverances, and when he looks at him from the beach, he may say—'You have formerly given me trouble enough, but I have cast anchor now where your billows can never reach me.'—It is happy for him that he can say so.

Mrs. Unwin returns you many thanks for your anxiety on her account. Her health is considerably mended upon the whole, so as to afford us a hope that it will be established. Our love attends you. Yours, dear madam, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN

Nov. 9, 1780.

I WROTE the following last summer. The tragical occasion of it really happened at the next house to ours. I am glad when I can find a subject to work upon; a lapidary I suppose accounts it a laborious part of the business to rub away the roughness of the stone; but it is my amusement, and if after all the polishing I can give it, it discovers some little lustre, I think myself well rewarded for my pains.*

I shall charge you a halfpenny a-piece for every copy I send you, the short as well as the long. This is a sort of afterclap you little expected, but I can not possibly afford them at a cheaper rate. If this method of raising money had occurred to me sooner, I should have made the bargain sooner

* Verses on a Goldfinch starved to death in a cage.

but am glad I have hit upon it at last. It will be a considerable encouragement to my muse, and act as a powerful stimulus to my industry. If the American war should last much longer, I may be obliged to raise my price, but this I shall not do without a real occasion for it—it depends much upon lord North's conduct in the article of supplies—if he imposes an additional tax on any thing that I deal in, the necessity of this measure, on my part, will be so apparent, that I dare say you will not dispute it. W. C.

In the interval between this and the following letter, the writer commenced the First Volume of his Poems.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *December* 25, 1780.

Weary with rather a long walk in the snow, I am not likely to write a very sprightly letter, or to produce any thing that may cheer this gloomy season, unless I have recourse to my pocket-book, where perhaps I may find something to transcribe, something that was written before the sun had taken leave of our hemisphere, and when I was less fatigued than I am at present.

Happy is the man who knows just so much of the law, as to make himself a little merry now and then with the solemnity of juridical proceedings. I have heard of common law judgments before now, indeed have been present at the delivery of some, that, according to my poor apprehension, while they paid the utmost respect to the letter of a statute, have departed widely from the spirit of it; and, being governed entirely by the point of law, have left equity, reason, and common sense, behind them at an infinite distance. You will judge whether the following report of a case, drawn up by myself, be not a proof and illustration of this satirical assertion.*

Yours affectionately, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *December*, 1780.

Poetical reports of law cases are not very common, yet it seems to me desirable that they should be so. Many advantages would accrue from such a measure. They would in the first place be more commodiously deposited in the memory, just as linen, grocery, or other such matters, when neatly packed, are known to occupy less room, and to lie more conveniently in any trunk, chest, or box, to which they may be committed. In the next place, being divested of that infinite circumlocution, and the endless embarrassment in which they are involved by it, they would become surprisingly intelligible, in comparison with their present obscurity. And lastly, they would by this means be rendered susceptible of musical embellishment, and instead of being quoted in the country, with that dull monotony, which is so wearisome to by-standers, and frequently lulls even the judges themselves to sleep, might be rehearsed in recitation; which would have an admirable effect, in keeping the attention fixed and lively, and could not fail to disperse that heavy atmosphere of sadness and gravity, which hangs over the jurisprudence of our country. I remember many years ago being informed by a relation of mine, who in his youth had applied himself to the study of the law, that one of his fellow-students, a gentleman of sprightly parts, and very respectable talents of the poetical kind, did actually engage in the prosecution of such a design; for reasons I suppose somewhat similar to, if not the same with those I have now suggested. He began with Coke's Institutes; a book so rugged in its style, that an attempt to polish it seemed an Herculean labour, and not less arduous and difficult, than it would be to give the smoothness of a rabbit's fur to the prickly back of a hedge-hog. But he succeeded to admiration, as you will perceive by the following specimen, which is all that my said relation could recollect of the performance.

Tenant in fee
Simple, is he,
And need neither quake nor quiver,
Who hath his lands,
Free from demands,
To him, and his heirs for ever.

You have an ear for music, and a taste for verse, which saves me the trouble of pointing out with a critical nicety the advantages of such a version. I proceed, therefore, to what I at first intended, and to transcribe the record of an adjudged case thus managed, to which indeed what I premised was intended merely as an introduction.*

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Feb.* 15, 1781.

I am glad you were pleased with my report of so extraordinary a case. If the thought of versifying the decisions of our courts of justice had struck me, while I had the honour to attend them, it would perhaps have been no difficult matter to have compiled a volume of such amusing and interesting precedents; which, if they wanted the eloquence of the Greek or Roman oratory, would

* The 'Report of an adjudged case, not to be found in any of the books,' concluded this letter. Vide Poems.

* This letter concludes with the poetical law case of "Nose plaintiff—Eyes, defendants," before referred to.

have amply compensated that deficiency by the harmony of rhyme and metre.

Your account of my uncle and your mother gave me great pleasure. I have long been afraid to inquire after some in whose welfare I always feel myself interested, lest the question should produce a painful answer. Longevity is the lot of so few, and is so seldom rendered comfortable by the associations of good health and good spirits, that I could not very reasonably suppose either your relations or mine so happy in those respects, as it seems they are. May they continue to enjoy those blessings so long as the date of life shall last. I do not think in these costermonger days, as I have a notion Falstaff calls them, an antediluvian age is at all a desirable thing; but to live comfortably, while we do live, is a great matter and comprehends in it every thing that can be wished for on this side the curtain that hangs between Time and Eternity.

Farewell my better friend than any I have to boast of either among the lords, or gentlemen of the house of commons. Yours ever, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *April* 2, 1781.

FINE weather, and a variety of *extraforaneous* occupations (search Johnson's dictionary for that word, and if not found there, insert it—for it saves a deal of circumlocution, and is very lawfully compounded) make it difficult (excuse the length of the parenthesis, which I did not foresee the length of when I began it, and which may perhaps a little perplex the sense of what I am writing, though, as I seldom deal in that figure of speech, I have the less need to make an apology for doing it at present) make it difficult (I say) for me to find opportunities for writing. My morning is engrossed by the garden; and in the afternoon, till I have drunk tea, I am fit for nothing. At five we walk; and when the walk is over, lassitude recommends rest, and again I become fit for nothing. The current hour therefore, which (I need not tell you) is comprised in the interval between four and five, is devoted to your service, as the only one in the twenty-four which is not otherwise engaged.

I do not wonder that you have felt a great deal upon the occasion you mention in your last, especially on account of the asperity you have met with in the behaviour of your friend. Reflect, however, that as it is natural to you to have very fine feelings, it is equally natural to some other tempers, to leave those feelings entirely out of the question, and to speak to you, and to act towards you, just as they do towards the rest of mankind, without the least attention to the irritability of your system Men of a rough and unsparing address should take great care, that they be always in the right: the justness and propriety of their sentiments and censures being the only tolerable apology that can be made for such a conduct, especially in a country where civility of behaviour is inculcated even from the cradle. But in the instance now under our contemplation, I think you a sufferer under the weight of an animadversion not founded in truth, and which, consequently, you did not deserve. I account him faithful in the pulpit, who dissembles nothing, that he believes, for fear of giving offence. To accommodate a discourse to the judgment and opinion of others, for the sake of pleasing them, though by doing so we are obliged to depart widely from our own, is to be unfaithful to ourselves at least, and can not be accounted fidelity to him, whom we profess to serve. But there are few men who do not stand in need of the exercise of charity and forbearance; and the gentleman in question has afforded you an ample opportunity in this respect, to show how readily, though differing in your views, you can practise all that he could possibly expect from you, if your persuasion corresponded exactly with his own

With respect to *Monsieur le Cure,* I think you not quite excusable for suffering such a man to give you any uneasiness at all. The grossness and injustice of his demand ought to be its own antidote. If a robber should miscall you a pitiful fellow for not carrying a purse full of gold about you, would his brutality give you any concern? I suppose not. Why then have you been distressed in the present instance?

Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

May 1, 1781.

YOUR mother says I *must* write, and *must* admits of no apology; I might otherwise plead that I have nothing to say, that I am weary, that I am dull, that it would be more convenient therefore for you, as well as for myself, that I should let it alone; but all these pleas, and whatever pleas besides either disinclination, indolence, or necessity might suggest, are overruled, as they ought to be, the moment a lady adduces her irrefragable argument, *you must.* You have still however one comfort left, that what I must write, you may, or may not read, just as it shall please you, unless lady Anne at your elbow should say, you must read it, and then, like a true knight, you will obey without looking for a remedy.

In the press, and speedily will be published, in one volume octavo, price three shillings, Poems, by William Cowper, of the Inner Temple, Esq. You may suppose, by the size of the publication,

that the greatest part of them have been long kept secret, because you yourself have never seen them: but the truth is, that they are most of them, except what you have in your possession, the produce of the last winter. Two-thirds of the compilation will be occupied by four pieces, the first of which sprung up in the month of December, and the last of them in the month of March. They contain, I suppose, in all about two thousand and five hundred lines; are known, or to be known in due time, by the names of *Table Talk—The Progress of Error—Truth—Expostulation.* Mr. Newton writes a Preface, and Johnson is the publisher. The principal, I may say the only reason why I never mentioned to you, till now, an affair which I am just going to make known to all the world, (if *that* Mr. All-the-world should think it worth his knowing) has been this; that till within these few days, I had not the honour to know it myself. This may seem strange, but it is true; for not knowing where to find underwriters who would choose to insure them; and not finding it convenient to a purse like mine, to run any hazard, even upon the credit of my own ingenuity, I was very much in doubt for some weeks, whether any bookseller would be willing to subject himself to an ambiguity, that might prove very expensive in case of a bad market. But Johnson has heroically set all peradventures at defiance, and takes the whole charge upon himself. So out I come. I shall be glad of my translations from Vincent Bourne, in your next frank. My Muse will lay herself at your feet immediately on her first public appearance.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR SIR, *May* 9, 1781.

I AM in the press, and it is in vain to deny it. But how mysterious is the conveyance of intelligence from one end to the other of your great city!—Not many days since, except one man, and he but little taller than yourself, all London was ignorant of it; for I do not suppose that the public prints have yet announced the most agreeable tidings, the title page, which is the basis of the advertisement, having so lately reached the publisher; and now it is known to you, who live at least two miles distant from my confidant upon the occasion.

My labours are principally the production of the last winter; all indeed, except a few of the minor pieces. When I can find no other occupation, I think, and when I think, I am very apt to do it in rhyme. Hence it comes to pass that the season of the year which generally pinches off the flowers of poetry, unfolds mine, such as they are, and crowns me with a winter garland. In this respect, therefore, I and my contemporary bards are by no means upon a par. They write when the delightful influences of fine weather, fine prospects, and a brisk motion of the animal spirits, make poetry almost the language of nature; and I, when icicles depend from all the leaves of the Parnassian laurel, and when a reasonable man would as little expect to succeed in verse, as to hear a blackbird whistle. This must be my apology to you for whatever want of fire and animation you may observe in what you will shortly have the perusal of. As to the public, if they like me not, there is no remedy. A friend will weigh and consider all disadvantages, and make as large allowances as an author can wish, and larger perhaps than he has any right to expect; but not so the world at large; whatever they do not like, they will not by any apology be persuaded to forgive, and it would be in vain to tell *them*, that I wrote my verses in January, for they would immediately reply, "Why did not you write them in May?" A question that might puzzle a wiser head than we poets are generally blessed with.

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *May* 10, 1781.

It is Friday; I have just drank tea, and just perused your letter: and though this answer can not set off till Sunday, I obey the warm impulse I feel, which will not permit me to postpone the business till the regular time of writing.

I expected you would be grieved; if you had not been so, those sensibilities which attend you upon every other occasion, must have left you upon this. I am sorry that I have given you pain, but not sorry that you have felt it. A concern of that sort would be absurd, because it would be to regret your friendship for me and to be dissatisfied with the effect of it. Allow yourself however three minutes only for reflection, and your penetration must necessarily dive into the motives of my conduct. In the first place, and by way of preface, remember that I do not (whatever your partiality may incline you to do) account it of much consequence to any friend of mine, whether he is, or is not employed by me upon such an occasion. But all affected renunciations of poetical merit apart, (and all unaffected expressions of the sense I have of my own littleness in the poetical character too) the obvious and only reason why I resorted to Mr. Newton, and not to my friend Unwin, was this—that the former lived in London, the latter at Stock; the former was upon the spot to correct the press, to give instructions respecting any sudden alterations, and to settle with the publisher every thing that might possibly occur

in the course of such a business: the latter could not be applied to, for these purposes, without what would be a manifest encroachment on his kindness; because it might happen, that the troublesome office might cost him now and then a journey, which it was absolutely impossible for me to endure the thought of.

When I wrote to you for the copies you have sent me, I told you I was making a collection, but not with a design to publish. There is nothing truer, than that at that time I had not the smallest expectation of sending a volume of Poems to the press. I had several small pieces that might amuse, but I would not, when I publish, make the amusement of the reader my only object. When the winter deprived me of other employments, I began to compose, and seeing six or seven months before me, which would naturally afford me much leisure for such a purpose, I undertook a piece of some length; that finished, another; and so on, till I had amassed the number of lines I mentioned in my last.

Believe of me what you please, but not that I am indifferent to you, or your friendship for me, on any occasion.

Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *May* 23, 1781.

If a writer's friends have need of patience, how much more the writer! Your desire to see my muse in public, and mine to gratify you, must both suffer the mortification of delay—I expected that my trumpeter would have informed the world by this time of all that is needful for them to know upon such an occasion; and that an advertising blast, blown through every newspaper, would have said—'The poet is coming.'—But man, especially man that writes verse, is born to disappointments, as surely as printers and booksellers are born to be the most dilatory and tedious of all creatures. The plain English of this magnificent preamble is, that the season of publication is just elapsed, that the town is going into the country every day, and that my book can not appear till they return, that is to say not till next winter. This misfortune however comes not without its attendant advantage; I shall now have, what I should not otherwise have had, an opportunity to correct the press myself; no small advantage upon any occasion, but especially important, where poetry is concerned! A single erratum may knock out the brains of a whole passage, and that perhaps, which of all others the unfortunate poet is the most proud of. Add to this, that now and then there is to be found in a printing house a presumptuous intermeddler, who will fancy himself a poet too, and what is still worse, a better than he that employs him. The consequence is, that with cobbling, and tinkering, and patching on here and there a shred of his own, he makes such a difference between the original and the copy, that an author can not know his own work again. Now as I choose to be responsible for nobody's dulness but my own, I am a little comforted, when I reflect that it will be in my power to prevent all such impertinence, and yet not without your assistance. It will be quite necessary, that the correspondence between me and Johnson should be carried on without the expense of postage, because proof sheets would make double or treble letters, which expense, as in every instance it must occur twice, first when the packet is sent, and again when it is returned, would be rather inconvenient to me, who, as you perceive, am forced to live by my wits, and to him, who hopes to get a little matter no doubt by the same means. Half a dozen franks therefore to me, and *totidem* to him, will be singularly acceptable, if you can, without feeling it in any respect a trouble, procure them for me.

I am much obliged to you for your offer to support me in a translation of Bourne. It is but seldom, however, and never except for my amusement, that I translate; because I find it disagreeable to work by another man's pattern; I should at least be sure to find it so in a business of any length. Again, *that* is epigrammatic and witty in Latin, which would be perfectly insipid in English; and a translator of Bourne would frequently find himself obliged to supply what is called the turn, which is in fact the most difficult, and the most expensive part of the whole composition, and could not perhaps, in many instances, be done with any tolerable success. If a Latin poem is neat, elegant, and musical, it is enough—but English readers are not so easily satisfied. To quote myself, you will find, in comparing the Jack-daw with the original, that I was obliged to sharpen a point which, though smart enough in the Latin, would, in English, have appeared as plain, and as blunt as the tag of a lace. I love the memory of Vinny Bourne. I think him a better Latin poet than Tibullus, Propertius, Ausonius, or any of the writers in *his* way, except Ovid, and not at all inferior to *him*. I love him too with a love of partiality, because he was usher of the fifth form at Westminster, when I passed through it. He was so good-natured, and so indolent, that I lost more than I got by him; for he made me as idle as himself. He was such a sloven, as if he had trusted to his genius as a cloak for every thing that could disgust you in his person; and indeed in his writings he has almost made amends for all. His humour is entirely original—he can speak of a magpie or a cat in terms so exclusively appropriated to the character he draws, that one

would suppose him animated by the spirit of the creature he describes. And with all his drollery there is a mixture of rational, and even religious reflection, at times: and always an air of pleasantry, good-nature, and humanity, that makes him, in my mind, one of the most amiable writers in the world. It is not common to meet with an author who can make you smile, and yet at nobody's expense: who is always entertaining, and yet always harmless; and who, though always elegant, and classical to a degree not always found in the classics themselves, charms more by the simplicity and playfulness of his ideas, than by the neatness and the purity of his verse; yet such was poor Vinny. I remember seeing the Duke of Richmond set fire to his greasy locks, and box his ears to put it out again. Since I began to write long poems, I seem to turn up my nose at the idea of a short one. I have lately entered upon one, which, if ever finished, can not easily be comprised in much less than a thousand lines! But this must make part of a second publication, and be accompanied, in due time, by others not yet thought of; for it seems (what I did not know till the bookseller had occasion to tell me so) that single pieces stand no chance, and that nothing less than a volume will go down. You yourself afford me a proof of the certainty of this intelligence, by sending me franks which nothing less than a volume can fill. I have accordingly sent you one, but am obliged to add, that had the wind been in any other point of the compass, or, blowing as it does from the east, had it been less boisterous, you must have been contented with a much shorter letter, but the abridgment of every other occupation is very favourable to that of writing.

I am glad I did not expect to hear from you by this post, for the boy has lost the bag in which your letter must have been enclosed—another reason for my prolixity! Yours affectionately, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *May*, 1781.

I believe I never give you trouble without feeling more than I give; so much by way of preface and apology.

Thus stands the case—Johnson has begun to print, and Mr. Newton has already corrected the first sheet. This unexpected despatch makes it necessary for me to furnish myself with the means of communication, viz. the franks, as soon as may be. There are reasons (I believe I mentioned them in my last) why I choose to revise the proofs myself:—nevertheless, if your delicacy must suffer the puncture of a pin's point in procuring the franks for me, I release you entirely from the task: you are as free as if I had never mentioned them. But you will oblige me by a speedy answer upon this subject, because it is expedient that the printer should know to whom he is to send his copy; and when the press is once set, those humble servants of the poets are rather impatient of any delay, because the types are wanted for other authors, who are equally impatient to be born.

This fine weather I suppose sets you on horseback, and allures the ladies into the garden. If I was at Stock, I should be of their party; and while they sat knotting or netting in the shade, should comfort myself with the thought, that I had not a beast under me, whose walk would seem tedious, whose trot would jumble me, and whose gallop might throw me into a ditch. What nature expressly designed me for I have never been able to conjecture; I seem to myself so universally disqualified for the common and customary occupations and amusements of mankind. When I was a boy, I excelled at cricket and foot-ball, but the fame I acquired by achievements that way is long since forgotten, and I do not know that I have made a figure in any thing else. I am sure, however, that she did not design me for a horseman; and that, if all men were of my mind, there would be an end of all jockeyship for ever. I am rather straitened for time, and not very rich in materials, therefore, with our joint love to you all, conclude myself, Yours ever, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *June* 5, 1781.

If the old adage be true, that 'he gives twice, who gives speedily,' it is equally true that he who not only uses expedition in giving, but, gives more than was asked, gives thrice at least. Such is the style in which Mr. —— confers a favour. He has not only sent me franks to Johnson, but under another cover, has added six to you. These last, for aught that appears by your letter, he threw in of his own mere bounty. I beg that my share of thanks may not be wanting on this occasion, and that when you write to him next you will assure him of the sense I have of the obligation, which is the more flattering, as it includes a proof of his predilection in favour of the poems his franks are destined to enclose. May they not forfeit his good opinion hereafter, nor yours, to whom I hold myself indebted in the first place, and who have equally given me credit for their deservings! Your mother says, that although there are passages in them containing opinions which will not be universally subscribed to, the world will at least allow what my great modesty will not permit me to subjoin. I have the highest opinion of her judgment, and know, by having experienced the soundness of them, that her observations are always worthy

of attention and regard. Yet, strange as it may seem, I do not feel the vanity of an author, when she commends me—but I feel something better, a spur to my diligence, and a cordial to my spirits, both together animating me to deserve, at least not to fall short of her expectations. For I verily believe, if my dulness should earn me the character of a dunce, the censure would affect her more than me; not that I am insensible of the value of a good name, either as a man or an author. Without an ambition to attain it, it is absolutely unattainable under either of those descriptions. But my life having been in many respects a series of mortifications and disappointments, I am become less apprehensive and impressible perhaps in some points than I should otherwise have been; and though I should be exquisitely sorry to disgrace my friends, could endure my own share of the affliction with a reasonable measure of tranquillity.

These seasonable showers have poured floods upon all the neighbouring parishes, but have passed us by. My garden languishes, and, what is worse, the fields too languish, and the upland grass is burnt. These discriminations are not fortuitous. But if they are providential, what do they import? I can only answer, as a friend of mine once answered a mathematical question in the schools—"*Prorsus nescio.*" Perhaps it is, that men, who will not believe what they can not understand, may learn the folly of their conduct, while their very senses are made to witness against them; and themselves in the course of Providence become the subjects of a thousand dispensations they can not explain. But the end is never answered. The lesson is inculcated indeed frequently enough, but nobody learns it. Well. Instruction vouchsafed in vain is, I suppose, a debt to be accounted for hereafter. You must understand this to be a soliloquy. I wrote my thoughts without recollecting that I was writing a letter, and to you. W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *June* 24, 1781.

The letter you withheld so long, lest it should give me pain, gave me pleasure. Horace says, the poets are a waspish race; and from my own experience of the temper of two or three, with whom I was formerly connected, I can readily subscribe to the character he gives them. But for my own part, I have never yet felt that excessive irritability, which some writers discover, when a friend, in the words of Pope,

"Just hints a fault, or hesitates dislike."

Least of all would I give way to such an unseasonable ebullition, merely because a civil question is proposed to me with such gentleness, and by a man whose concern for my credit and character I verily believe to be sincere. I reply, therefore, not peevishly, but with a sense of the kindness of your intentions, that I hope you may make yourself very easy on a subject, that I can perceive has occasioned you some solicitude. When I wrote the poem called *Truth*, it was indispensably necessary that I should set forth that doctrine which I know to be true, and that I should pass what I understood to be a just censure upon opinions and persuasions that differ from, or stand in direct opposition to it; because, though some errors may be innocent, and even religious errors are not always pernicious, yet in a case where the faith and hope of a Christian are concerned, they must necessarily be destructive; and because, neglecting this, I should have betrayed my subject; either suppressing what, in my judgment, is of the last importance, or giving countenance by a timid silence, to the very evils it was my design to combat. That you may understand me better, I will subjoin—that I wrote that poem on purpose to inculcate the eleemosynary character of the gospel, as a dispensation of mercy, in the most absolute sense of the word, to the exclusion of all claims of merit on the part of the receiver; consequently to set the brand of invalidity upon the plea of works, and to discover, upon spiritual ground, the absurdity of that notion, which includes a solecism in the very terms of it, that man, by repentance and good works, may deserve the mercy of his Maker: I call it a solecism, because mercy deserved ceases to be mercy, and must take the name of justice. This is the opinion which I said in my last the world would not acquiesce in; but except this, I do not recollect that I have introduced a syllable into any of my pieces, that they can possibly object to; and even this I have endeavoured to deliver from doctrinal dryness, by as many pretty things, in the way of trinket and plaything, as I could muster upon the subject. So that if I have rubbed their gums, I have taken care to do it with a coral, and even that coral embellished by the ribbon to which it is tied, and recommended by the tinkling of all the bells I could contrive to annex to it.

You need not trouble yourself to call on Johnson; being perfectly acquainted with the progress of the business, I am able to satisfy your curiosity myself—the post before the last I returned to him the second sheet of *Table Talk*, which he had sent me for correction, and which stands foremost in the volume. The delay has enabled me to add a piece of considerable length, which, but for the delay, would not have made its appearance upon this occasion; it answers to the name of Hope.

I remember a line in the Odyssey, which, literally translated, imports that there is nothing in the world more impudent than the belly. But had Homer met with an instance of modesty like yours, he would either have suppressed that observation,

or at least have qualified it with an exception. I hope that, for the future, Mrs. Unwin will never suffer you to go to London without putting some victuals in your pocket; for what a strange article would it make in a newspaper, that a tall, well-dressed gentleman, by his appearance a clergyman, and with a purse of gold in his pocket, was found starved to death in the street. How would it puzzle conjecture to account for such a phenomenon! Some would suppose that you had been kidnapped, like Betty Canning, of hungry memory; others would say, the gentleman was a methodist, and had practised a rigorous self-denial, which had unhappily proved too hard for his constitution; but I will venture to say that nobody would divine the real cause, or suspect for a moment, that your modesty had occasioned the tragedy in question. By the way, is it not possible, that the spareness and slenderness of your person may be owing to the same cause? for surely it is reasonable to suspect that the bashfulness which could prevail against you, on so trying an occasion, may be equally prevalent on others. I remember having been told by Colman, that when he once dined with Garrick, he repeatedly pressed him to eat more of a certain dish, that he was known to be particularly fond of; Colman as often refused, and at last declared he could not: "But could not you," says Garrick, "if you was in a dark closet by yourself?" The same question might perhaps be put to you with as much, or more propriety, and therefore I recommend it to you, either to furnish yourself with a little more assurance or always to eat in the dark.

We sympathize with Mrs. Unwin; and if it will be any comfort to her to know it, can assure her, that a lady in our neighbourhood is always, on such occasions, the most miserable of all things, and yet escapes with great facility through all the dangers of her state. Yours, *ut semper*. W.C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

July 6, 1781.

We are obliged to you for the rugs, a commodity that can never come to such a place as this at an unseasonable time. We have given one to an industrious poor widow, with four children, whose sister overheard her shivering in the night, and with some difficulty brought her to confess the next morning, that she was half perished for want of sufficient covering. Her said sister borrowed a rug for her at a neighbour's immediately, which she had used only one night when yours arrived: and I doubt not but we shall meet with others, equally indigent and deserving of your bounty.

Much good may your humanity do you, as it does so much good to others!—You can no where find objects more entitled to your pity than where your pity seeks them. A man, whose vices and irregularities have brought his liberty and life into danger, will always be viewed with an eye of compassion by those who understand what human nature is made of; and while we acknowledge the severities of the law to be founded upon principles of necessity and justice, and are glad that there is such a barrier provided for the peace of society, if we consider that the difference between ourselves and the culprit is not of our own making, we shall be, as you are, tenderly affected by the view of his misery; and not the less so because he has brought it upon himself.

I give you joy of your own hair, no doubt you are considerably a gainer in your appearance by being *disperiwiged*. The best wig is that which most resembles the natural hair. Why then should he, who has hair enough of his own, have recourse to imitation? I have little doubt but that if an arm or leg could have been taken off with as little pain as attends the amputation of a curl or a lock of hair, the natural limb would have been thought less becoming, or less convenient, by some men, than a wooden one, and have been disposed of accordingly.

Having begun my letter with a miserable pen, I was unwilling to change it for a better, lest my writing should not be all of a piece. But it has worn me and my patience quite out. Yours ever,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND, *July* 12, 1781.

I am going to send, what when you have read, you may scratch your head, and say, I suppose, there's nobody knows, whether what I have got, be verse or not—by the tune and the time, it ought to be rhyme; but if it be, did you ever see, of late or of yore, such a ditty before?

I have writ Charity, not for popularity, but as well as I could, in hopes to do good; and if the reviewer should say "to be sure, the gentleman's muse wears methodist shoes, you may know by her pace, and talk about grace, that she and her bard have little regard, for the taste and fashions, and ruling passions, and hoidening play. of the modern day; and though she assume a borrowed plume, and now and then wear a tittering air, 'tis only her plan, to catch if she can, the giddy and gay, as they go that way, by a production, on a new construction; she has baited her trap, in hopes to snap all that may come, with a sugar-plum." ——His opinion in this will not be amiss; 'tis what I intend my principal end; and if I succeed, and folks should read, till a few are brought to a se-

rious thought, I should think I am paid, for all I have said, and all I have done, though I have run, many a time, after a rhyme, as far as from hence, to the end of my sense, and by hook or crook, write another book, if I live and am here, another year.

I have heard before, of a room with a floor, laid upon springs, and such like things, with so much art, in every part, that when you went in, you was forced to begin a minuet pace, with an air and a grace, swimming about, now in and now out, with a deal of state, in a figure of eight, without pipe or string, or any such thing; and now I have writ, in a rhyming fit, what will make you dance, and as you advance, will keep you still, though against your will, dancing away, alert and gay, till you come to an end of what I have penn'd; which that you may do, ere Madam and you are quite worn out with jigging about, I take my leave, and here you receive, a bow profound, down to the ground, from your humble me— W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *July* 29, 1781.

Having given the case you laid before me in your last all due consideration, I proceed to answer it; and in order to clear my way, shall, in the first place, set down my sense of those passages in Scripture which, on a hasty perusal, seem to clash with the opinion I am going to give—"if a man smite one cheek, turn the other."—"If he take thy cloak, let him take thy coat also."—That is, I suppose, rather than on a vindictive principle avail yourself of that remedy the law allows you, in the way of retaliation, for that was the subject immediately under the discussion of the speaker. Nothing is so contrary to the genius of the Gospel, as the gratification of resentment and revenge; but I can not easily persuade myself to think, that the author of that dispensation could possibly advise his followers to consult their own peace at the expense of the peace of society, or inculcate an universal abstinence from the use of lawful remedies, to the encouragement of injury and oppression.

St. Paul again seems to condemn the practice of going to law, "Why do ye not rather suffer wrong? &c." But if we look again, we shall find that a litigious temper had obtained, and was prevalent among the professors of the day. This he condemned, and with good reason; it was unseemly to the last degree, that the disciples of the Prince of Peace should worry and vex each other with injurious treatment, and unnecessary disputes, to the scandal of their religion in the eyes of the heathen. But surely he did not mean any more than his Master, in the place above alluded to, that the most harmless members of society should receive no advantage of its laws, or should be the only persons in the world who should derive no benefit from those institutions, without which society can not subsist. Neither of them could mean to throw down the pale of property, and to lay the Christian part of the world open, throughout all ages, to the incursions of unlimited violence and wrong.

By this time you are sufficiently aware, that I think you have an undisputable right to recover at law what is so dishonestly withheld from you. The fellow, I suppose, has discernment enough to see a difference between you and the generality of the clergy; and cunning enough to conceive the purpose of turning your meekness and forbearance to good account, and of coining them into hard cash, which he means to put in his pocket. But I would disappoint him, and show him, that though a Christian is not to be quarrelsome, he is not to be crushed—and that though he is but a worm before God, he is not such a worm, as every selfish unprincipled wretch may tread upon at his pleasure.

I lately heard a story from a lady, who has spent many years of her life in France, somewhat to the present purpose. An Abbé, universally esteemed for his piety, and especially for the meekness of his manners, had, yet undesignedly, given some offence to a shabby fellow in his parish. The man, concluding he might do as he pleased with so forgiving and gentle a character, struck him on one cheek, and bade him turn the other. The good man did so, and when he had received the two slaps, which he thought himself obliged to submit to, turned again, and beat him soundly. I do not wish to see you follow the French gentleman's example, but I believe nobody that has heard the story condemns him much for the spirit he showed upon the occasion.

I had the relation from Lady Austen,* sister to Mrs. Jones, wife of the minister at Clifton. She is a most agreeable woman, and has fallen in love with your mother and me; insomuch, that I do not know but she may settle at Olney. Yesterday se'ennight we all dined together in the *Spinnie*—a most delightful retirement, belonging to Mrs. Throckmorton of Weston. Lady Austen's lackey, and a lad that waits on me in the garden, drove a wheelbarrow full of eatables and drinkables to the scene of our *Fête Champêtre*. A board laid over the top of the wheelbarrow served us for a table; our dining-room was a root-house lined with moss and ivy. At six o'clock, the servants, who had dined under a great elm upon the ground, at a little distance, boiled the kettle, and the said

* Widow of Sir Robert Austen, Bart. and the lady alluded to in the advertisement prefixed to the Task.

wheelbarrow served us for a tea-table. We then took a walk into the wilderness, about half a mile off, and were at home again a little after eight, having spent the day together from noon till evening, without one cross occurrence, or the least weariness of each other. A happiness few parties of pleasure can boast of.

Yours, with our joint love, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *August* 25, 1781.

WE rejoice with you sincerely in the birth of another son, and in the prospect you have of Mrs. Unwin's recovery; may your three children, and the next three, when they shall make their appearance, prove so many blessings to their parents, and make you wish that you had twice the number. But what made you expect daily that you should hear from me? Letter for letter is the law of all correspondence whatsoever, and because I wrote last, I have indulged myself for some time in expectation of a sheet from you.—Not that I govern myself entirely by the punctilio of reciprocation, but having been pretty much occupied of late, I was not sorry to find myself at liberty to exercise my discretion, and furnished with a good excuse if I choose to be silent.

I expected, as you remember, to have been published last spring, and was disappointed. The delay has afforded me an opportunity to increase the quantity of my publication by about a third; and if my muse has not forsaken me, which I rather suspect to be the case, may possibly yet add to it. I have a subject in hand, which promises me a great abundance of poetical matter, but which, for want of a something I am not able to describe, I can not at present proceed with. The name of it is *Retirement*, and my purpose, to recommend the proper improvement of it, to set forth the requisites for that end, and to enlarge upon the happiness of that state of life, when managed as it ought to be. In the course of my journey through this ample theme, I should wish to touch upon the characters, the deficiencies, and the mistakes of thousands, who enter on a scene of retirement, unqualified for it in every respect, and with such designs as to have no tendency to promote either their own happiness or that of others. But as I have told you before, there are times when I am no more a poet than I am a mathematician; and when such a time occurs, I always think it better to give up the point, than to labour it in vain. I shall yet again be obliged to trouble you for franks; the addition of three thousand lines, or near that number, having occasioned a demand which I did not always foresee; but your obliging friend, and your obliging self, having allowed me the liberty of application, I make it without apology.

The solitude, or rather the duality of our condition at Olney, seems drawing to a conclusion. You have not forgot, perhaps, that the building we inhabit consists of two mansions. And because you have only seen the inside of that part of it which is in our occupation, I therefore inform you, that the other end of it is by far the most superb, as well as the most commodious. Lady Austen has seen it, has set her heart upon it, is going to fit it up and furnish it, and if she can get rid of the remaining two years of the lease of her London house, will probably enter upon it in a twelve-month. You will be pleased with this intelligence, because I have already told you, that she is a woman perfectly well-bred, sensible, and in every respect agreeable; and above all, because she loves your mother dearly. It has in my eyes (and I doubt not it will have the same in yours) strong marks of providential interposition. A female friend, and one who bids fair to prove herself worthy of the appellation, comes, recommended by a variety of considerations, to such a place as Olney. Since Mr. Newton went, and till this lady came, there was not in the kingdom a retirement more absolutely such than ours. We did not want company, but when it came, we found it agreeable. A person that has seen much of the world, and understands it well, has high spirits, a lively fancy, and great readiness of conversation, introduces a sprightliness into such a scene as this, which if it was peaceful before, is not the worse for being a little enlivened. In case of illness too, to which all are liable, it was rather a gloomy prospect, if we allowed ourselves to advert to it, that there was hardly a woman in the place from whom it would have been reasonable to have expected either comfort or assistance. The present curate's wife is a valuable person, but has a family of her own, and though a neighbour, is not a very near one. But if this plan is effected, we shall be in a manner one family, and I suppose never pass a day without some intercourse with each other.

Your mother sends her warm affections, and welcomes into the world the new-born William.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *October* 6, 1781.

WHAT a world are you daily conversant with, which I have not seen these twenty years, and shall never see again! The arts of dissipation (I suppose) are no where practised with more refinement or success, than at the place of your present residence. By your account of it, it seems to be

just what it was when I visited it, a scene of idleness and luxury, music, dancing, cards, walking, riding, bathing, eating, drinking, coffee, tea, scandal, dressing, yawning, sleeping, the rooms perhaps more magnificent, because the proprietors are grown richer, but the manners and occupations of the company just the same. Though my life has long been like that of a recluse, I have not the temper of one, nor am I in the least an enemy to cheerfulness and good humour; but I can not envy you your situation; I even feel myself constrained to prefer the silence of this nook, and the snug fireside in our own diminutive parlour, to all the splendour and gaiety of Brighton.

You ask me, how I feel on the occasion of my approaching publication? Perfectly at my ease. If I had not been pretty well assured before hand that my tranquillity would be but little endangered by such a measure, I would never have engaged in it; for I can not bear disturbance. I have had in view two principal objects; first to amuse myself; and secondly, to compass that point in such a manner, that others might possibly be the better for my amusement. If I have succeeded, it will give me pleasure; but if I have failed, I shall not be mortified to the degree that might perhaps be expected. I remember an old adage (though not where it is to be found), *bene vixit, qui bene latuit*, and if I had recollected it at the right time, it should have been the motto to my book. By the way, it will make an excellent one for Retirement, if you can but tell me whom to quote for it. The critics can not deprive me of the pleasure I have in reflecting, that so far as my leisure has been employed in writing for the public, it has been conscientiously employed, and with a view to their advantage. There is nothing agreeable, to be sure, in being chronicled for a dunce; but I believe there lives not a man upon earth, who would be less affected by it than myself. With all this indifference to fame, which you know me too well to suppose me capable of affecting, I have taken the utmost pains to deserve it. This may appear a mystery or a paradox in practice, but it is true. I considered that the taste of the day is refined, and delicate to excess, and that to disgust that delicacy of taste, by a slovenly inattention to it, would be to forfeit at once all hope of being useful; and for this reason, though I have written more verse this last year, than perhaps any man in England, I have finished, and polished, and touched, and retouched, with the utmost care. If after all I should be converted into waste paper, it may be my misfortune, but it will not be my fault. I shall bear it with the most perfect serenity.

I do not mean to give ———— a copy: he is a good-natured little man, and crows exactly like a cock, but knows no more of verse than the cock he imitates.

Whoever supposes that Lady Austen's fortune is precarious, is mistaken. I can assure you, upon the ground of the most circumstantial and authentic information, that it is both genteel and perfectly safe. Yours, W. C.

TO MRS. COWPER.

MY DEAR COUSIN, *Oct.* 19, 1781.

YOUR fear lest I should think you unworthy of my correspondence, on account of your delay to answer, may change sides now, and more properly belongs to me. It is long since I received your last, and yet I believe I can say truly, that not a post has gone by me since the receipt of it, that has not reminded me of the debt I owe you, for your obliging and unreserved communications both in prose and verse, especially for the latter, because I consider them as marks of your peculiar confidence. The truth is, I have been such a verse-maker myself, and so busy in preparing a volume for the press, which I imagine will make its appearance in the course of the winter, that I hardly had leisure to listen to the calls of any other engagement. It is however finished, and gone to the printer's, and I have nothing now to do with it, but to correct the sheets as they are sent to me, and consign it over to the judgment of the public. It is a bold undertaking at this time of day, when so many writers of the greatest abilities have gone before, who seem to have anticipated every valuable subject, as well as all the graces of poetical embellishment, to step forth into the world in the character of a bard, especially when it is considered, that luxury, idleness, and vice, have debauched the public taste, and that nothing hardly is welcome but childish fiction, or what has at least a tendency to excite a laugh. I thought, however, that I had stumbled upon some subjects, that had never before been poetically treated, and upon some others, to which I imagined it would not be difficult to give an air of novelty by the manner of treating them. My sole drift is to be useful; a point which however I knew I should in vain aim at, unless I could be likewise entertaining. I have therefore fixed these two strings upon my bow, and by the help of both have done my best to send my arrow to the mark. My readers will hardly have begun to laugh, before they will be called upon to correct that levity and peruse me with a more serious air. As to the effect, I leave it alone in His hands, who can alone produce it: neither prose nor verse can reform the manners of a dissolute age, much less can they inspire a sense of religious obligation, unless assisted and

made efficacious by the power who superintends the truth he has vouchsafed to impart.

You made my heart ache with a sympathetic sorrow, when you described the state of your mind on occasion of your late visit into Hertfordshire. Had I been previously informed of your journey before you made it, I should have been able to have foretold all your feeling with the most unerring certainty of prediction. You will never cease to feel upon that subject; but with your principles of resignation, and acquiescence in the divine will, you will always feel as becomes a christian. We are forbidden to murmur, but we are not forbidden to regret; and whom we loved tenderly while living, we may still pursue with an affectionate remembrance, without having any occasion to charge ourselves with rebellion against the sovereignty that appointed a separation. A day is coming, when I am confident you will see and know, that mercy to both parties was the principal agent in a scene, the recollection of which is still painful. W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Nov.* 5, 1781.

I GIVE you joy of your safe return from the lips of the great deep. You did not indeed discern many signs of sobriety, or true wisdom, among the people of Brighthelmstone, but it is not possible to observe the manners of a multitude, of whatever rank, without learning something; I mean, if a man has a mind like yours, capable of reflection. If he sees nothing to imitate, he is sure to see something to avoid; if nothing to congratulate his fellow creatures upon, at least much to excite his compassion. There is not, I think, so melancholy a sight in the world (an hospital is not to be compared with it) as that of a thousand persons distinguished by the name of gentry, who, gentle perhaps by nature, and made more gentle by education, have the appearance of being innocent and inoffensive, yet being destitute of all religion, or not at all governed by the religion they profess, are none of them at any great distance from an eternal state, where self-deception will be impossible, and where amusements can not enter. Some of them, we may say, will be reclaimed—it is most probable indeed that some of them will, because mercy, if one may be allowed the expression, is fond of distinguishing itself by seeking its objects among the most desperate class; but the Scripture gives no encouragement to the warmest charity to hope for deliverance for them all. When I see an afflicted and an unhappy man, I say to myself, there is perhaps a man whom the world would envy, if they knew the value of his sorrows, which are possibly intended only to soften his heart, and to turn his affections toward their proper centre. But when I see or hear of a crowd of voluptuaries, who have no ears but for music, no eyes but for splendour, and no tongue but for impertinence and folly—I say, or at least I see occasion to say—This is madness—This persisted in must have a tragical conclusion—It will condemn you, not only as christians unworthy of the name, but as intelligent creatures—You know by the light of nature, if you have not quenched it, that there is a God, and that a life like yours can not be according to his will.

I ask no pardon of you for the gravity and gloominess of these reflections, which I stumbled on when I least expected it; though, to say the truth, these or others of a like complexion are sure to occur to me when I think of a scene of public diversion like that you have lately left.

I am inclined to hope that Johnson told you the truth, when he said he should publish me soon after Christmas. His press has been rather more punctual in its remittances, than it used to be; we have now but little more than two of the longest pieces, and the small ones that are to follow, by way of epilogue, to print off, and then the affair is finished. But once more I am obliged to gape for franks; only these, which I hope will be the last I shall want, at yours and Mr. ——'s convenient leisure.

We rejoice that you have so much reason to be satisfied with John's proficiency. The more spirit he has, the better, if his spirit is but manageable, and put under such management as your prudence and Mrs. Unwin's will suggest. I need not guard you against severity, of which I conclude there is no need, and which I am sure you are not at all inclined to practise without it; but perhaps if I was to whisper beware of too much indulgence —I should only give a hint that the fondness of a father for a fine boy might seem to justify. I have no particular reason for the caution, at this distance it is not possible I should, but in a case like yours, an admonition of that sort seldom wants propriety. Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Nov.* 26, 1781.

I WROTE to you by the last post, supposing you at Stock; but lest that letter should not follow you to Laytonstone, and you should suspect me of unreasonable delay, and lest the frank you have sent me should degenerate into waste paper, and perish upon my hands, I write again. The former letter, however, containing all my present stock of intelligence, it is more than possible that this may prove a blank, or but little worthy your acceptance. You will do me the justice to suppose, that if I

could be very entertaining, I would be so, because, by giving me credit for such a willingness to please, you only allow me a share of that universal vanity, which inclines every man, upon all occasions, to exhibit himself to the best advantage. To say the truth, however, when I write, as I do to you, not about business, nor on any subject that approaches to that description, I mean much less my correspondent's amusement, which my modesty will not always permit me to hope for, than my own. There is a pleasure annexed to the communication of one's ideas, whether by word of mouth, or by letter, which nothing earthly can supply the place of, and it is the delight we find in this mutual intercourse, that not only proves us to be creatures intended for social life, but more than any thing else perhaps fits us for it. I have no patience with philosophers—they, one and all, suppose (at least I understand it to be a prevailing opinion among them) that man's weakness, his necessities, his inability to stand alone, have furnished the prevailing motive, under the influence of which he renounced at first a life of solitude, and became a gregarious creature. It seems to me more reasonable, as well as more honourable to my species, to suppose, that generosity of soul, and a brotherly attachment to our own kind, drew us, as it were, to one common centre, taught us to build cities, and inhabit them, and welcome every stranger, that would cast in his lot amongst us, that we might enjoy fellowship with each other, and the luxury of reciprocal endearments, without which a paradise could afford no comfort. There are indeed all sorts of characters in the world; there are some whose understandings are so sluggish, and whose hearts are such mere clods, that they live in society without either contributing to the sweets of it, or having any relish for them. A man of this stamp passes by our window continually—I never saw him conversing with a neighbour but once in my life, though I have known him by sight these twelve years; he is of a very sturdy make, and has a round belly, extremely protuberant, which he evidently considers as his best friend, because it is his only companion, and it is the labour of his life to fill it. I can easily conceive, that it is merely the love of good eating and drinking, and now and then the want of a new pair of shoes, that attaches this man so much to the neighbourhood of his fellow mortals; for suppose these exigencies, and others of a like kind, to subsist no longer, and what is there that could possibly give society the preference in his esteem? He might strut about with his two thumbs upon his hips in the wilderness, he could hardly be more silent than he is at Olney, and for any advantage, or comfort, or friendship, or brotherly affection, he could not be more destitute of such blessings there, than in his present situation. But other men have something more than guts to satisfy; there are the yearnings of the heart, which, let philosophers say what they will, are more importunate than all the necessities of the body, that will not suffer a creature, worthy to be called human, to be contented with an insulated life, or to look for his friends among the beasts of the forest. Yourself, for instance! It is not because there are no tailors or pastry-cooks to be found upon Salisbury plain, that you do not choose it for your abode, but because you are a philanthropist—because you are susceptible of social impressions, and have a pleasure in doing a kindness when you can. Now upon the word of a poor creature, I have said all that I have said, without the least intention to say one word of it when I began. But thus it is with my thoughts—when you shake a crab-tree the fruit falls; good for nothing indeed when you have got it, but still the best that is to be expected from a crab-tree. You are welcome to them, such as they are, and if you approve my sentiments, tell the philosophers of the day, that I have outshot them all, and have discovered the true origin of society, when I least looked for it.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Jan.* 5, 1782.

Did I allow myself to plead the common excuse of idle correspondents, and esteem it a sufficient reason for not writing, that I have nothing to write about, I certainly should not write now. But I have so often found, on similar occasions, when a great penury of matter has seemed to threaten me with an utter impossibility of hatching a letter, that nothing is necessary but to put pen to paper, and go on, in order to conquer all difficulties; that, availing myself of past experience, I now begin with a most assured persuasion, that sooner or later, one idea naturally suggesting another, I shall come to a most prosperous conclusion.

In the last Review, I mean in the last but one, I saw Johnson's critique upon Prior and Pope. I am bound to acquiesce in his opinion of the latter, because it has always been my own. I could never agree with those who preferred him to Dryden; nor with others (I have known such, and persons of taste and discernment too) who could not allow him to be a poet at all. He was certainly a mechanical maker of verses, and in every line he ever wrote, we see indubitable marks of most indefatigable industry and labour. Writers who find it necessary to make such strenuous and painful exertions, are generally as phlegmatic as they are correct; but Pope was, in this respect, exempted from the common lot of authors of that class. With the unwearied application of a plodding Flemish painter, who draws a shrimp with the most

minute exactness, he had all the genius of one of the first masters. Never I believe were such talents and such drudgery united. But I admire Dryden most, who has succeeded by mere dint of genius, and in spite of a laziness and carelessness almost peculiar to himself. His faults are numberless, and so are his beauties. His faults are those of a great man, and his beauties are such (at least sometimes) as Pope, with all his touching, and retouching, could never equal. So far, therefore, I have no quarrel with Johnson. But I can not subscribe to what he says of Prior. In the first place, though my memory may fail me, I do not recollect that he takes any notice of his Solomon; in my mind the best poem, whether we consider the subject of it, or the execution, that he ever wrote. In the next place, he condemns him for introducing Venus and Cupid into his love-verses, and concludes it impossible his passion could be sincere, because when he would express it he has recourse to fables. But when Prior wrote, those deities were not so obsolete as they are at present. His contemporary writers, and some that succeeded him, did not think them beneath their notice. Tibullus, in reality, disbelieved their existence as much as we do; yet Tibullus is allowed to be the prince of all poetical inamoratos, though he mentions them in almost every page. There is a fashion in these things, which the Doctor seems to have forgotten. But what shall we say of his fusty-rusty remarks upon Henry and Emma? I agree with him, that morally considered, both the knight and his lady are bad characters, and that each exhibits an example which ought not to be followed. The man dissembles in a way that would have justified the woman had she renounced him; and the woman resolves to follow him at the expense of delicacy, propriety, and even modesty itself. But when the critic calls it a dull dialogue, who but a critic will believe him? There are few readers of poetry of either sex, in this country, who can not remember how that enchanting piece has bewitched them, who do not know, that instead of finding it tedious, they have been so delighted with the romantic turn of it, as to have overlooked all its defects, and to have given it a consecrated place in their memories, without ever feeling it a burthen. I wonder almost, that as the Bacchanals served Orpheus, the boys and girls do not tear this husky, dry, commentator, limb from limb, in resentment of such an injury done to their darling poet. I admire Johnson as a man of great erudition and sense; but when he sets himself up for a judge of writers upon the subject of love, a passion which I suppose he never felt in his life, he might as well think himself qualified to pronounce upon a treatise on horsemanship, or the art of fortification.

The next packet I receive will bring me, I imagine, the last proof sheet of my volume, which will consist of about three hundred and fifty pages honestly printed. My public *entrée* therefore is not far distant. Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR WILLIAM, *Jan.* 17, 1782.

I am glad we agree in our opinion of king critic, and the writers on whom he has bestowed his animadversions. It is a matter of indifference to me whether I think with the world at large or not, but I wish my friends to be of my mind. The same work will wear a different appearance in the eyes of the same man, according to the different views with which he reads it; if merely for his amusement, his candour being in less danger of a twist from interest or prejudice, he is pleased with what is really pleasing, and is not over curious to discover a blemish, because the exercise of a minute exactness is not consistent with his purpose. But if he once becomes a critic by trade, the case is altered. He must then at any rate establish, if he can, an opinion in every mind, of his uncommon discernment, and his exquisite taste. This great end he can never accomplish by thinking in the track that has been beaten under the hoof of public judgment. He must endeavour to convince the world, that their favourite authors have more faults than they are aware of, and such as they have never suspected. Having marked out a writer, universally esteemed, whom he finds it for that very reason convenient to depreciate and traduce, he will overlook some of his beauties, he will faintly praise others, and in such a manner as to make thousands, more modest, though quite as judicious as himself, question whether they are beauties at all. Can there be a stronger illustration of all that I have said, than the severity of Johnson's remarks upon Prior, I might have said the injustice? His reputation as an author who, with much labour indeed but with admirable success, has embellished all his poems with the most charming ease, stood unshaken till Johnson thrust his head against it. And how does he attack him in this his principal fort? I can not recollect his very words, but I am much mistaken, indeed, if my memory fails me with respect to the purport of them. "His words," he says, "appear to be forced into their proper places; there indeed we find them, but find likewise that their arrangement has been the effect of constraint, and that without violence they would certainly have stood in a different order." By your leave, most learned Doctor, this is the most disingenuous remark I ever met with, and would have come with a better grace from Curl, or Dennis. Every man conversant with verse-writing knows, and knows by painful

experience, that the familiar style is of all styles the most difficult to succeed in. To make verse speak the language of prose, without being prosaic, to marshall the words of it in such an order, as they might naturally take in falling from the lips of an extemporary speaker, yet without meanness; harmoniously, elegantly, and without seeming to displace a syllable for the sake of the rhyme, is one of the most arduous tasks a poet can undertake. He that could accomplish this task was Prior; many have imitated his excellence in this particular, but the best copies have fallen far short of the original. And now to tell us, after we and our fathers have admired him for it so long, hat he is an easy writer indeed, but that his ease has an air of stiffness in it, in short, that his ease is not ease, but only something like it, what is it but a self-contradiction, an observation that grants what it is just going to deny, and denies what it has just granted, in the same sentence, and in the same breath?—But I have filled the greatest part of my sheet with a very uninteresting subject. I will only say, that as a nation we are not much indebted, in point of poetical credit, to this too sagacious and unmerciful judge; and that for myself in particular, I have reason to rejoice that he entered upon and exhausted the labours of his office, before my poor volume could possibly become an object of them. By the way, you can not have a book at the time you mention; I have lived a fortnight or more in expectation of the last sheet, which is not yet arrived.

You have already furnished John's memory with by far the greatest part of what a parent could wish to store it with. If all that is merely trivial, and all that has an immoral tendency, were expunged from our English poets, how would they shrink, and how would some of them completely vanish. I believe there are some of Dryden's Fables, which he would find very entertaining; they are for the most part fine compositions, and not above his apprehension; but Dryden has written few things, that are not blotted here and there with an unchaste allusion, so that you must pick his way for him, lest he should tread in the dirt. You did not mention Milton's Allegro and Penseroso, which I remember being so charmed with when I was a boy that I was never weary of them. There are even passages in the paradisiacal part of the Paradise Lost, which he might study with advantage. And to teach him, as you can, to deliver some of the fine orations made in the Pandæmonium, and those between Satan, Ithuriel, and Zephon, with emphasis, dignity, and propriety, might be of great use to him hereafter. The sooner the ear is formed, and the organs of speech are accustomed to the various inflections of the voice, which the rehearsal of those passages demands, the better. I should think too, that Thomson's Seasons might afford him some useful lessons. At least they would have a tendency to give his mind an observing and a philosophical turn. I do not forget that he is but a child. But I remember, that he is a child favoured with talents superior to his years. We were much pleased with his remarks on your almsgiving, and doubt not but it will be verified with respect to the two guineas you sent us, which have made four Christian people happy. Ships I have none, nor have touched a pencil these three years; if ever I take it up again, which I rather suspect I shall not (the employment requiring stronger eyes than mine), it shall be at John's service.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Feb.* 2, 1782.

THOUGH I value your correspondence highly on its own account, I certainly value it the more in consideration of the many difficultics under which you carry it on. Having so many other engagements, and engagements so much more worthy your attention, I ought to esteem it, as I do, a singular proof of your friendship, that you so often make an opportunity to bestow a letter upon me; and this, not only because mine, which I write in a state of mind not very favourable to religious contemplations, are never worth your reading, but especially because while you consult my gratification and endeavour to amuse my melancholy, your thoughts are forced out of the only channel in which they delight to flow, and constrained into another so different and so little interesting to a mind like yours, that but for me, and for my sake, they would perhaps never visit it. Though I should be glad therefore to hear from you every week, I do not complain that I enjoy that privilege but once in a fortnight, but am rather happy to be indulged in it so often.

I thank you for the jog you gave Johnson's elbow; communicated from him to the printer it has produced me two more sheets, and two more will bring the business, I suppose, to a conclusion. I sometimes feel such a perfect indifference with respect to the public opinion of my book, that I am ready to flatter myself no censure of reviewers, or other critical readers, would occasion me the smallest disturbance. But not feeling myself constantly possessed of this desirable apathy, I am sometimes apt to suspect, that it is not altogether sincere, or at least that I may lose just in the moment when I may happen most to want it. Be it however as it may, I am still persuaded that it is not in their power to mortify me much. I have intended well, and performed to the best of my ability—so far was right, and this is a boast o.

which they can not rob me. If they condemn my poetry, I must even say with Cervantes, "Let them do better if they can!"—if my doctrine, they judge that which they do not understand; I shall except to the jurisdiction of the court, and plead, *Coram non judice.* Even Horace could say, he should neither be the plumper for the praise, nor the leaner for the condemnation of his readers; and it will prove me wanting to myself indeed, if, supported by so many sublimer considerations than he was master of, I can not sit loose to popularity, which, like the wind, bloweth where it listeth, and is equally out of our command. If you, and two or three more such as you, say, well done, it ought to give me more contentment than if I could earn Churchill's laurels, and by the same means.

I wrote to Lord Dartmouth to apprise him of my intended present, and have received a most affectionate and obliging answer.

I am rather pleased that you have adopted other sentiments respecting our intended present to the critical Doctor. I allow him to be a man of gigantic talents, and most profound learning, nor have I any doubts about the universality of his knowledge. But by what I have seen of his animadversions on the poets, I feel myself much disposed to question, in many instances, either his candour or his taste. He finds fault too often, like a man that, having sought it very industriously, is at last obliged to stick it on a pin's point, and look at it through a microscope; and I am sure I could easily convict him of having denied many beauties, and overlooked more. Whether his judgment be in itself defective, or whether it be warped by collateral considerations, a writer upon such subjects as I have chosen would probably find but little mercy at his hands.

No winter since we knew Olney has kept us more confined than the present. We have not more than three times escaped into the fields, since last autumn. Man, a changeable creature in himself, seems to subsist best in a state of variety, as his proper element—a melancholy man at least is apt to grow sadly weary of the same walks, and the same pales, and to find that the same scene will suggest the same thoughts perpetually.

Though I have spoken of the utility of changes, we neither feel nor wish for any in our friendships, and consequently stand just where we did with respect to your whole self.

Yours, my dear sir, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Feb.* 9, 1782.

I THANK you for Mr. Lowth's verses. They are so good, that had I been present when he spoke them, I should have trembled for the boy, lest the man should disappoint the hopes such early genius had given birth to. It is not common to see so lively a fancy so correctly managed, and so free from irregular exuberance, at so unexperienced an age; fruitful, yet not wanton, and gay without being tawdry. When schoolboys write verse, if they have any fire at all, it generally spends itself in flashes, and transient sparks, which may indeed suggest an expectation of something better hereafter, but deserve not to be much commended for any real merit of their own. Their wit is generally forced and false, and their sublimity, if they affect any, bombast. I remember well when it was thus with me, and when a turgid, noisy, unmeaning speech in a tragedy, which I should now laugh at, afforded me raptures, and filled me with wonder. It is not in general till reading and observation have settled the taste, that we can give the prize to the best writing, in preference to the worst. Much less are we able to execute what is good ourselves. But Lowth seems to have stepped into excellence at once, and to have gained by intuition what we little folks are happy if we can learn at last, after much labour of our own, and instruction of others. The compliments he pays to the memory of King Charles, he would probably now retract, though he be a bishop, and his majesty's zeal for episcopacy was one of the causes of his ruin. An age or two must pass, before some characters can be properly understood. The spirit of party employs itself in veiling their faults, and ascribing to them virtues which they never possessed. See Charles's face drawn by Clarendon, and it is a handsome portrait. See it more justly exhibited by Mrs. Macauley, and it is deformed to a degree that shocks us. Every feature expresses cunning, employing itself in the maintaining of tyranny—and dissimulation, pretending itself an advocate for truth.

My letters have already apprized you of that close and intimate connexion that took place between the lady you visited in Queen Ann-street, and us. Nothing could be more promising, though sudden in the commencement. She treated us with as much unreservedness of communication, as if we had been born in the same house, and educated together. At her departure, she herself proposed a correspondence, and because writing does not agree with your mother, proposed a correspondence with me. By her own desire I wrote to her under the assumed relation of a brother, and she to me as my sister.

I thank you for the search you have made after my intended motto, but I no longer need it.—Our love is always with yourself and family.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Feb. 16, 1782.

CARACCIOLI says,—"There is something very bewitching in authorship, and that he who has once written will write again." It may be so—I can subscribe to the former part of his assertion from my own experience, having never found an amusement, among the many I have been obliged to have recourse to, that so well answered the purpose for which I used it. The quieting and composing effect of it was such, and so totally absorbed have I sometimes been in my rhyming occupation, that neither the past nor the future (those themes which to me are so fruitful in regret at other times), had any longer a share in my contemplation. For this reason I wish, and have often wished, since the fit left me, that it would seize me again; but hitherto I have wished it in vain. I see no want of subjects, but I feel a total disability to discuss them. Whether it is thus with other writers or not, I am ignorant, but I should suppose my case in this respect a little peculiar. The voluminous writers at least, whose vein of fancy seems always to have been rich in proportion to their occasions, can not have been so unlike, and so unequal to themselves. There is this difference between my poetship and the generality of *them*—they have been ignorant how much they have stood indebted to an Almighty power for the exercise of those talents they have supposed their own. Whereas I know, and know most perfectly, and am perhaps to be taught it to the last, that my power to think, whatever it be, and consequently my power to compose, is, as much as my outward form, afforded to me by the same hand that makes me, in any respect, to differ from a brute. This lesson, if not constantly inculcated, might perhaps be forgotten, or at least too slightly remembered.

W. C.

"Caraccioli* appears to me to have been a wise man, and I believe he was a good man in a religious sense. But his wisdom and his goodness both savour more of the philosopher than the Christian. In the latter of these characters he seems defective principally in this—that instead of sending his reader to God as an inexhaustible source of happiness to his intelligent creatures, and exhorting him to cultivate communion with his Maker, he directs him to his own heart, and to the contemplation of his own faculties and powers as a never-failing spring of comfort and content He speaks even of the natural man as made in the image of God, and supposes a resemblance of God to consist in a sort of independent self-sufficing and self-complacent felicity, which can hardly be enjoyed without the forfeiture of all humility, and a flat denial of some of the most important truths in Scripture.

"As a philosopher he refines to an excess, and his arguments, instead of convincing others, if pushed as far as they would go, would convict him of absurdity himself. When for instance he would depreciate earthly riches by telling us that gold and diamonds are only matter modified in a particular way, and thence concludes them not more valuable in themselves than the dust under our feet, his consequence is false, and his cause is hurt by the assertion. It is that very modification that gives them both a beauty and a value—a value and a beauty recognised in Scripture, and by the universal consent of all well informed and civilized nations. It is in vain to tell mankind, that gold and dirt are equal, so long as their experience convinces them of the contrary. It is necessary therefore to distinguish between the thing itself and the abuse of it. Wealth is in fact a blessing, when honestly acquired, and conscientiously employed; and when otherwise, the man is to be blamed and not his treasure. How does the Scripture combat the vice of covetousness? not by asserting that gold is only earth exhibiting itself to us under a particular modification, and therefore not worth seeking; but by telling us that covetousness is idolatry, that the love of money is the root of all evil, that it has occasioned in some even the shipwreck of their faith, and is always, in whomsoever it obtains, an abomination.

"A man might have said to Caraccioli, Give me your purse full of ducats, and I will give you my old wig; they are both composed of the same matter under different modifications. What could the philosopher have replied? he must have made the exchange, or have denied his own principles.

"Again, when speaking of sumptuous edifices, he calls a palace an assemblage of sticks and stones, which a puff of wind may demolish, or a spark of fire consume; and thinks he has reduced a magnificent building and a cottage to the same level, when he has told us that the latter viewed through an optic glass may be made to appear as large as the former, and that the former seen through the same glass inverted may be reduced to the pitiful dimensions of the latter; has he indeed carried his point? is he not rather imposing on the judgment of his readers, just as the glass would impose upon their senses? How is it possible to deduce a substantial argument in this case from an acknowledged deception of the sight? The

* These cursory remarks of Cowper appear highly worthy of preservation. They were written on several scraps of paper, without any title, and find perhaps their most suitable place as a sequel to the letter in which he quoted the writer, whose character he has here sketched at full length, and with masterly hand.

objects continue what they were, the palace is still a palace, and the cottage is not at all ennobled in reality, though we contemplate them ever so long through an illusive medium. There is in fact a real difference between them, and such a one as the Scripture itself takes very emphatical notice of, assuring us that in the last day, much shall be required of him to whom much was given; that every man shall be then considered as a steward, and render a strict account of the things with which he was intrusted. This consideration indeed may make the dwellers in palaces tremble, who, living for the most part in the continued abuse of their talents, squandering and wasting and spending upon themselves their Master's treasure, will have reason enough to envy the cottager, whose accounts will be more easily settled. But to tell mankind, that a palace and a hovel are the same thing, is to affront their senses, to contradict their knowledge, and to disgust their understandings.

"Herein seems to consist one of the principal differences between Philosophy and Scripture, or the Wisdom of Man and the Wisdom of God. The former endeavours indeed to convince the judgment, but it frequently is obliged to have recourse to unlawful means, such as misrepresentation and the play of fancy. The latter addresses itself to the judgment likewise, but it carries its point by awakening the conscience, by enlightening the understanding, and by appealing to our own experience. As Philosophy therefore can not make a Christian, so a Christian ought to take care that he be not too much a Philosopher. It is mere folly instead of wisdom, to forego those arguments, and to shut our eyes upon those motives which Truth itself has pointed out to us, and which alone are adequate to the purpose, and to busy ourselves in making vain experiments on the strength of others of our own invention. In fact, the world which, however it has dared to controvert the authenticity of Scripture, has never been able to impeach the wisdom of its precepts, or the reasonableness of its exhortations, has sagacity enough to see through the fallacy of such reasonings, and will rather laugh at the sage, who declares war against matter of fact, than become proselytes to his opinion."

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Feb.* 24, 1782.

If I should receive a letter from you to-morrow, you must still remember that I am not in your debt, having paid you by anticipation—Knowing that you take an interest in my publication, and that you have waited for it with some impatience, I write to inform you that, if it is possible for a printer to be punctual, I shall come forth on the first of March. I have ordered two copies to Stock; one for Mr. John Unwin. It is possible, after all, that my book may come forth without a Preface. Mr. Newton has written (he could indeed write no other) a very sensible as well as a very friendly one; and it is printed. But the bookseller, who knows him well, and esteems him highly, is anxious to have it cancelled, and, with my consent first obtained, has offered to negociate that matter with the author.—He judges, that though it would serve to recommend the volume to the religious, it would disgust the profane, and that there is in reality no need of any Preface at all. I have found Johnson a very judicious man on other occasions, and am therefore willing that he should determine for me upon this.

There are but few persons to whom I present my book. The lord chancellor is one. I enclose in a packet I send by this post to Johnson a letter to his lordship which will accompany the volume; and to you I enclose a copy of it, because I know you will have a friendly curiosity to see it. An author is an important character. Whatever his merits may be, the mere circumstance of authorship warrants his approach to persons, whom otherwise perhaps he could hardly address without being deemed impertinent. He can do me no good. If I should happen to do him a little, I shall be a greater man than he. I have ordered a copy likewise to Mr. S.

I hope John continues to be pleased, and to give pleasure. If he loves instruction, he has a tutor who can give him plentifully of what he loves; and with his natural abilities his progress must be such as you would wish. Yours, W. C.

TO LORD THURLOW.

(ENCLOSED TO MR. UNWIN.)

MY LORD, *Olney, Bucks, Feb.* 25, 1782.

I make no apology for what I account a duty. I should offend against the cordiality of our former friendship should I send a volume into the world, and forget how much I am bound to pay my particular respects to your lordship upon that occasion. When we parted, you little thought of hearing from me again; and I as little that I should live to write to you, still less, that I should wait on you in the capacity of an author.

Among the pieces I have the honour to send, there is one for which I must entreat your pardon. I mean that of which your lordship is the subject. The best excuse I can make is, that it flowed almost spontaneously from the affectionate remembrance of a connexion that did me so much honour

As to the rest, their merits, if they have any, and their defects, which are probably more than

I am aware of, will neither of them escape your notice. But where there is much discernment, there is generally much candour; and I commit myself into your lordship's hands with the less anxiety, being well acquainted with yours.

If my first visit, after so long an interval, should prove neither a troublesome, nor a dull one, but especially, if not altogether an unprofitable one, *omne tuli punctum.*

I have the honour to be, though with very different impressions of some subjects, yet with the same sentiments of affection and esteem as ever, your lordship's faithful, and most obedient, humble servant, W. C.

TO THE REV. J. NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Feb.* 1782.

I enclose Johnson's letter upon the subject of the Preface, and would send you my reply to it, if I had kept a copy. This however was the purport of it. That Mr. ——, whom I described as you described him to me, had made a similar objection, but that being willing to hope, that two or three pages of sensible matter, well expressed, might possibly go down, though of a religious cast, I was resolved to believe him mistaken, and to pay no regard to it. That *his* judgment, however, who by his occupation is bound to understand what will promote the sale of a book, and what will hinder it, seemed to deserve more attention. That therefore, according to his own offer written on a small slip of paper now lost, I should be obliged to him if he would state his difficulties to you; adding, that I need not inform *him*, who is so well acquainted with you, that he would find you easy to be persuaded to sacrifice, if necessary, what you had written, to the interests of the book. I find he has had an interview with you upon the occasion, and your behaviour has verified my prediction. What course he determines upon I do not know, nor am I at all anxious about it. It is impossible for me however to be so insensible of your kindness in writing the preface, as not to be desirous of defying all contingencies rather than entertain a wish to suppress it. It will do me honour in the eyes of those whose good opinion is indeed an honour, and if it hurts me in the estimation of others, I can not help it; the fault is neither yours nor mine, but theirs. If a minister's is a more splendid character than a poet's, and I think nobody that understands their value can hesitate in deciding that question, then undoubtedly the advantage of having our names united in the same volume is all on my side.

We thank you for the Fast-sermon. I had not read two pages before I exclaimed ——— the man has read Expostulation. But though there is a strong resemblance between the two pieces in point of matter, and sometimes the very same expressions are to be met with, yet I soon recollected that, on such a theme, a striking coincidence of both might happen without a wonder. I doubt not that it is the production of an honest man, it carries with it an air of sincerity and zeal, that is not easily counterfeited. But though I can see no reason why kings should not sometimes hear of their faults, as well as other men, I think I see many good ones why they should not be reproved so publicly. It can hardly be done with that respect which is due to their office, on the part of the author, or without encouraging a spirit of unmannerly censure in his readers. His majesty too perhaps might answer—my own personal feelings and offences I am ready to confess; but were I to follow your advice, and cashier the profligate from my service, where must I seek men of faith, and true christian piety, qualified by nature and by education to succeed them? Business must be done, men of business alone can do it, and good men are rarely found under that description. When Nathan reproved David, he did not employ a herald, or accompany his charge with the sound of the trumpet; nor can I think the writer of this sermon quite justifiable in exposing the king's faults in the sight of the people.

Your answer respecting Ætna is quite satisfactory, and gives me much pleasure. I hate altering, though I never refuse the task when propriety seems to enjoin it; and an alteration in this instance, if I am not mistaken, would have been singularly difficult. Indeed, when a piece has been finished two or three years, and an author finds occasion to amend, or make an addition to it, it is not easy to fall upon the very vein from which he drew his ideas in the first instance; but either a different turn of thought, or expression, will betray the patch, and convince a reader of discernment that it has been cobbled and varnished.

Our love to you both, and to the young Euphrosyne, the old lady of that name being long since dead; if she pleases she shall fill her vacant office, and be my muse hereafter.

Yours, my dear sir, W. C

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

March 6, 1782.

Is peace the nearer because our patriots have resolved that it is desirable? Will the victory they have gained in the House of Commons be attended with any other? Do they expect the same success on other occasions, and having once gained a majority are they to be the majority for ever?—— These are the questions we agitate by the fireside in an evening, without being able to come to any

certain conclusion, partly I suppose because the subject is in itself uncertain, and partly because we are not furnished with the means of understanding it. I find the politics of times past far more intelligible than those of the present. Time has thrown light upon what was obscure, and decided what was ambiguous. The characters of great men, which are always mysterious while they live, are ascertained by the faithful historian, and sooner or later receive their wages of fame or infamy, according to their true deserts. How have I seen sensible and learned men burn incense to the memory of Oliver Cromwell, ascribing to him, as the greatest hero in the world, the dignity of the British empire during the interregnum. A century passed before that idol, which seemed to be of gold, was proved to be a wooden one. The fallacy however was at length detected, and the honour of that detection has fallen to the share of a woman. I do not know whether you have read Mrs. Macaulay's history of that period. She has handled him more roughly than the Scots did at the battle of Dunbar. He would have thought it little worth his while to have broken through all obligations divine and human, to have wept crocodile tears, and wrapped himself up in the obscurity of speeches that nobody could understand, could he have foreseen that in the ensuing century a lady's scissars would clip his laurels close, and expose his naked villany to the scorn of all posterity. This however has been accomplished, and so effectually, that I suppose it is not in the power of the most artificial management to make them grow again. Even the sagacious of mankind are blind when Providence leaves them to be deluded; so blind, that a tyrant shall be mistaken for a true patriot, true patriots (such were the Long Parliament) shall be abhorred as tyrants, and almost a whole nation shall dream, that they have the full enjoyment of liberty, for years after such a complete knave as Oliver shall have stolen it completely from them. I am indebted for all this show of historical knowledge to Mr. Bull, who has lent me five volumes of the work I mention. I was willing to display it while I have it; in a twelve-month's time I shall remember almost nothing of the matter. W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *March* 7, 1782.

We have great pleasure in the contemplation of your Northern journey, as it promises us a sight of you and yours by the way, and are only sorry Miss Shuttleworth can not be of the party. A line to ascertain the hour when we may expect you, by the next preceding post, will be welcome.

It is not much for my advantage that the printer delays so long to gratify your expectation. It is a state of mind that is apt to tire and disconcert us; and there are but few pleasures that make us amends for the pain of repeated disappointment. I take it for granted you have not received the volume, not having received it myself, nor indeed heard from Johnson, since he fixed the first of the month for its publication.

What a medley are our public prints, half the page filled with the ruin of the country, and the other half filled with the vices and pleasures of it—here an island taken, and there a new comedy—here an empire lost, and there an Italian opera, or a Lord's rout on a Sunday!

"May it please your lordship! I am an Englishman, and must stand or fall with the nation. Religion, its true palladium, has been stolen away; and it is crumbling into dust. Sin ruins us, the sins of the great especially, and of their sins especially the violation of the Sabbath, because it is naturally productive of all the rest. If you wish well to our arms, and would be glad to see the kingdom emerging again from her ruins, pay more respect to an ordinance that deserves the deepest! I do not say pardon this short remonstrance!—— The concern I feel for my country, and the interest I have in its prosperity, give me a right to make it. I am, &c."

Thus one might write to his lordship, and (I suppose) might be as profitably employed in whistling the tune of an old ballad.

I have no copy of the preface, nor do I know at present how Johnson and Mr. Newton have settled it. In the matter of it there was nothing offensively peculiar; but it was thought too pious.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.*

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *March* 14, 1782.

I can only repeat what I said sometime since, that the world is grown more foolish and careless than it was when I had the honour of knowing it. Though your preface was of a serious cast, it was yet free from every thing that might, with propriety, expose it to the charge of Methodism, being guilty of no offensive peculiarities, nor containing any of those obnoxious doctrines at which the world is so apt to be angry, and which we must give her leave to be angry at, because we know she can not help it. It asserted nothing more than every rational creature must admit to be true—"that divine and earthly things can no longer stand in competition with each other, in the judgment of any man, than while he continues igno-

* At this period, the first volume of the writer's poems issued from the press.

rant of their respective value; and that the moment the eyes are opened, the latter are always cheerfully relinquished for the sake of the former." Now I do most certainly remember the time when such a proposition as this would have been at least supportable, and when it would not have spoiled the market of any volume, to which it had been prefixed, ergo——the times are altered for the worse.

I have reason to be very much satisfied with my publisher—he marked such lines as did not please him, and as often as I could, I paid all possible respect to his animadversions. You will accordingly find, at least if you recollect how they stood in the MS., that several passages are better for having undergone his critical notice. Indeed I do not know where I could have found a bookseller who could have pointed out to me my defects with more discernment; and as I find it is a fashion for modern bards to publish the names of the literati, who have favoured their works with a revisal, would myself most willingly have acknowledged my obligations to Johnson, and so I told him. I am to thank you likewise, and ought to have done it in the first place, for having recommended to me the suppression of some lines, which I am now more than ever convinced would at least have done me no honour. W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,

The modest terms in which you express yourself on the subject of lady Austen's commendation embolden me to add my suffrage to hers, and to confirm it by assuring you I think her just and well founded in her opinion of you. The compliment indeed glances at myself; for were you less than she accounts you, I ought not to afford you that place in my esteem which you have held so long. My own sagacity therefore and discernment are not a little concerned upon the occasion, for either you resemble the picture, or I have strangely mistaken my man, and formed an erroneous judgment of his character. With respect to your face and figure indeed, there I leave the ladies to determine, as being naturally best qualified to decide the point; but whether you are perfectly the man of sense, and the gentleman, is a question in which I am as much interested as they, and which, you being my friend, I am of course prepared to settle in your favour. The lady (whom, when you know her as well, you will love as much as we do) is, and has been during the last fortnight, a part of our family. Before she was perfectly restored to health, she returned to Clifton. Soon after she came back, Mr. Jones had occasion to go to London. No sooner was he gone, than the *Chateau*, being left without a garrison, was besieged as regularly as the night came on. Villains were both heard and seen in the garden, and at the doors and windows. The kitchen window in particular was attempted, from which they took a complete pane of glass, exactly opposite to the iron by which it was fastened; but providentially the window had been nailed to the woodwork, in order to keep it close, and that the air might be excluded; thus they were disappointed, and being discovered by the maid, withdrew. The ladies being worn out with continual watching, and repeated alarms, were at last prevailed upon to take refuge with us. Men furnished with firearms were put into the house, and the rascals, having intelligence of this circumstance, beat a retreat. Mr. Jones returned; Mrs. Jones and Miss Green, her daughter, left us, but Lady Austen's spirits having been too much disturbed, to be able to repose in a place where she had been so much terrified, she was left behind. She remains with us till her lodgings at the vicarage can be made ready for her reception. I have now sent you what has occurred of moment in our history since my last.

I say amen, with all my heart, to your observation on religious characters. Men who profess themselves adepts in mathematical knowledge, in astronomy, or jurisprudence, are generally as well qualified as they would appear. The reason may be, that they are always liable to detection, should they attempt to impose upon mankind, and therefore take care to be what they pretend. In religion alone, a profession is often slightly taken up, and slovenly carried on, because forsooth candor and charity require us to hope the best, and to judge favourably of our neighbour, and because it is easy to deceive the ignorant, who are a great majority, upon this subject. Let a man attach himself to a particular party, contend furiously for what are properly called evangelical doctrines, and enlist himself under the banner of some popular preacher, and the business is done. Behold a Christian! a Saint! a Phœnix!—In the mean time perhaps his heart, and his temper, and even his conduct, are unsanctified; possibly less exemplary than those of some avowed infidels. No matter—he can talk—he has the Shibboleth of the true church—the Bible in his pocket, and a head well stored with notions. But the quiet, humble, modest, and peaceable person, who is in his practice what the other is only in his profession, who hates a noise, and therefore makes none, who knowing the snares that are in the world, keeps himself as much out of it as he can, and never enters it, but when duty calls, and even then with fear and trembling—is the Christian

that will always stand highest in the estimation of those, who bring all characters to the test of true wisdom, and judge of the tree by its fruit.

You are desirous of visiting the prisoners; you wish to administer to their necessities, and to give them instruction. This task you will undertake, though you expect to encounter many things in the performance of it, that will give you pain. Now *this* I can understand—you will not listen to the sensibilities that distress yourself, but to the distresses of others. Therefore, when I meet with one of the specious praters above-mentioned, I will send him to Stock, that by your diffidence he may be taught a lesson of modesty; by your generosity, a little feeling for others; and by your general conduct, in short, to chatter less, and to do more.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *March* 18, 1782.

Nothing has given me so much pleasure, since the publication of my volume, as your favourable opinion of it. It may possibly meet with acceptance from hundreds, whose commendation would afford me no other satisfaction than what I should find in the hope that it might do them good. I have some neighbours in this place, who say they like it—doubtless I had rather they should than that they should not—but I know them to be persons of no more taste in poetry, than skill in the mathematics; their applause therefore is a sound that has no music in it for me. But my vanity was not so entirely quiescent when I read your friendly account of the manner it had affected *you*. It was tickled, and pleased, and told me in a pretty loud whisper, that others perhaps of whose taste and judgment I had a high opinion, would approve it too. As a giver of good counsels, I wish to please all—as an author, I am perfectly indifferent to the judgment of all, except the few who are indeed judicious. The circumstance however in your letter which pleased me most was, that you wrote in high spirits, and though you said much, suppressed more, lest you should hurt my delicacy—my delicacy is obliged to you—but you observe it is not so squeamish, but that after it has feasted upon praise expressed, it can find a comfortable dessert in the contemplation of praise implied. I now feel as if I should be glad to begin another volume, but from the will to the power is a step too wide for me to take at at present, and the season of the year brings with it so many avocations into the garden, where I am my own *fac totum*, that I have little or no leisure for the quill. I should do myself much wrong, were I to omit mentioning the great complacency with which I read your narrative of Mrs. Unwin's smiles and tears; persons of much sensibility are always persons of taste, and a taste for poetry depends indeed upon that very article more than upon any other. If she had Aristotle by heart, I should not esteem her judgment so highly, were she defective in point of feeling, as I do, and must esteem it, knowing her to have such feelings as Aristotle could not communicate, and as half the readers in the world are destitute of. This it is that makes me set so high a price upon your mother's opinion. She is a critic by nature, and not by rule, and has a perception of what is good or bad in composition, that I never knew deceive her; insomuch, that when two sorts of expression have pleaded equally for the precedence, in my own esteem, and I have referred, as in such cases I always did, the decision of the point to her, I never knew her at a loss for a just one.

Whether I shall receive any answer from his Chancellorship or not, is at present *in ambiguo*, and will probably continue in the same state of ambiguity much longer. He is so busy a man, and at this time, if the papers may be credited, so particularly busy, that I am forced to mortify myself with the thought, that both my book and my letter may be thrown into a corner as too insignificant for a statesman's notice, and never found till his executor finds them. This affair however is neither at my *libitum* nor his. I have sent him the truth. He that put it into the heart of a certain eastern monarch, to amuse himself one sleepless night with listening to the records of his kingdom, is able to give birth to such another occasion, and inspire his lordship with a curiosity to know what he has received from a friend he once loved and valued. If an answer comes, however, you shall not long be a stranger to the contents of it.

I have read your letter to their worships, and much approve of it. May it have the effect it ought! If not, still you have acted a humane and becoming part, and the poor aching toes and fingers of the prisoners will not appear in judgment against you. I have made a slight alteration in the last sentence, which perhaps you will not disapprove.

Yours ever, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM BULL.

March 24, 1782.

Your letter gave me great pleasure, both as a testimony of your approbation, and of your regard. I wrote in hopes of pleasing you, and such as you; and though I must confess that, at the same time, I cast a side-long glance at the good

liking of the world at large, I believe I can say it was more for the sake of their advantage and instruction than their praise. They are children; if we give them physic, we must sweeten the rim of the cup with honey—if my book is so far honoured as to be made the vehicle of true knowledge to any that are ignorant, I shall rejoice; and do already rejoice that it has procured me a proof of your esteem.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *April* 1, 1782.

I COULD not have found a better trumpeter. Your zeal to serve the interest of my volume, together with your extensive acquaintance, qualify you perfectly for that most useful office. Methinks I see you with the long tube at your mouth, proclaiming to your numerous connexions my poetical merits, and at proper intervals levelling it at Olney, and pouring into my ear the welcome sound of their approbation. I need not encourage you to proceed, your breath will never fail in such a cause; and thus encouraged, I myself perhaps may proceed also, and when the versifying fit returns, produce another volume. Alas! we shall never receive such commendations from him on the woolsack, as your good friend has lavished upon us. Whence I learn, that however important I may be in my own eyes, I am very insignificant in his. To make me amends however for this mortification, Mr. Newton tells me, that my book is likely to run, spread, and prosper; that the grave can not help smiling, and the gay are struck with the truth of it; and that it is likely to find its way into his Majesty's hands, being put into a proper course for that purpose. Now if the King should fall in love with my Muse, and with you for her sake, such an event would make us ample amends for the Chancellor's indifference, and you might be the first divine that ever reached a mitre from the shoulders of a poet. But (I believe) we must be content, I with my gains, if I gain any thing, and you with the pleasare of knowing that I am a gainer.

We laughed heartily at your answer to little John's question; and yet I think you might have given him a direct answer—"There are various sorts of cleverness, my dear—I do not know that mine lies in the poetical way, but I can do ten times more towards the entertainment of company in the way of conversation than our friend at Olney. He can rhyme, and I can rattle. If he had my talent, or I had his, we should be too charming, and the world would almost adore us."

Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN

MY DEAR WILLIAM, *April* 27, 1782.

A PART of Lord Harrington's new-raised corps have taken up their quarters at Olney, since you left us. They have the regimental music with them. The men have been drawn up this morning upon the Market-hill, and a concert such as we have not heard these many years, has been performed at no great distance from our window. Your mother and I both thrust our heads into the coldest east-wind that ever blew in April, that we might hear them to greater advantage. The band acquitted themselves with taste and propriety, not *blairing*, like trumpeters at a fair, but, producing gentle and elegant symphony, such as charmed our ears, and convinced us that no length of time can wear out a taste for harmony; and that though plays, balls, and masquerades have lost all their power to please us, and we should find them not only insipid but insupportable, yet sweet music is sure to find a corresponding faculty in the soul, a sensibility that lives to the last, which even religion itself does not extinguish.

When we objected to your coming for a single night, it was only in the way of argument, and in hopes to prevail on you to contrive a longer abode with us. But rather than not see you at all, we should be glad of you though but for an hour. If the paths should be clean enough, and we are able to walk (for you know we can not ride), we will endeavour to meet you in Weston-park. But I mention no particular hour, that I may not lay you under a supposed obligation to be punctual, which might be difficult at the end of so long a journey. Only if the weather be favourable, you shall find us there in the evening. It is winter in the south, perhaps therefore it may be spring at least, if not summer, in the north. For I have read that it is warmest in Greenland when it is coldest here. Be that as it may, we may hope at the latter end of such an April that the first change of wind will improve the season.

The curate's simile Latinized——

Sors adversa gerit stimulum, sed tendit et alas:
Pungit, api similis, sed, velut ista, fugit.

What a dignity there is in the Roman language! and what an idea it gives us of the good sense and masculine mind of the people that spoke it! The same thought which clothed in English seems childish, and even foolish, assumes a different air in Latin, and makes at least as good an epigram as some of Martial's.

I remember your making an observation, when here, on the subject of parenthesis, to which I acquiesced without limitation; but a little attention will convince us both, that they are not to be universally condemned. When they abound, and when

they are long, they both embarrass the sense, and are a proof that the writer's head is cloudy, that he has not properly arranged his matter, or is not well skilled in the graces of expression. But as parenthesis is ranked by grammarians among the figures of rhetoric, we may suppose they had a reason for conferring that honour upon it. Accordingly we shall find that in the use of some of our finest writers, as well as in the hands of the ancient poets and orators, it has a peculiar elegance, and imparts a beauty which the period would want without it.

'Hoc nemus, hunc,' inquit, 'frondoso vertice collem
(Quis deus incertum est) habitat deus.' *Vir. Æn.* 8.

In this instance, the first that occurred, it is graceful. I have not time to seek for more, nor room to insert them. But your own observation I believe will confirm my opinion.

Yours ever, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *May* 27, 1782.

RATHER ashamed of having been at all dejected by the censure of the Critical Reviewers, who certainly could not read without prejudice a book replete with opinions and doctrines to which they can not subscribe, I have at present no little occasion to keep a strict guard upon my vanity, lest it should be too much flattered by the following eulogium. I send it you for the reasons I gave when I imparted to you some other anecdotes of a similar kind, while we were together. Our interests in the success of this same volume are so closely united, that you *must* share with me in the praise or blame that attends it; and sympathizing with me under the burthen of injurious treatment, have a right to enjoy with me the cordials I now and then receive, as I happen to meet with more favourable and candid judges.

A merchant, a friend of ours, (you will soon guess him) sent my Poems to one of the first philosophers, one of the most eminent literary characters, as well as one of the most important in the political world, that the present age can boast of. Now perhaps your conjuring faculties are puzzled, and you begin to ask 'who, where, and what is he? speak out, for I am all impatience.' I will not say a word more, the letter in which he returned his thanks for the present shall speak for him.*

We may now treat the critics as the archbishop of Toledo treated Gil Blas, when he found fault with one of his sermons.—His grace gave him a kick, and said, 'Be gone for a jackanapes, and furnish yourself with a better taste, if you know where to find it.'

We are glad that you are safe at home again. Could we see at one glance of the eye what is passing every day upon all the roads in the kingdom, how many are terrified and hurt, how many plundered and abused, we should indeed find reason enough to be thankful for journeys performed in safety, and for deliverance from dangers we are not perhaps even permitted to see. When in some of the high southern latitudes and in a dark tempestuous night, a flash of lightning discovered to Captain Cook a vessel, which glanced along close by his side, and which, but for the lightning he must have run foul of, both the danger, and the transient light that showed it, were undoubtedly designed to convey to him this wholesome instruction, that a particular Providence attended him, and that he was not only preserved from evils, of which he had notice, but from many more of which he had no information, or even the least suspicion. What unlikely contingencies may nevertheless take place! How improbable that two ships should dash against each other, in the midst of the vast Pacific Ocean, and that steering contrary courses, from parts of the world so immensely distant from each other, they should yet move so exactly in a line as to clash, fill, and go to the bottom, in a sea where all the ships in the world might be so dispersed as that none should see another! Yet this must have happened but for the remarkable interference, which he has recorded. The same Providence indeed might as easily have conducted them so wide of each other, that they should never have met at all, but then this lesson would have been lost; at least, the heroic voyager would have encompassed the globe without having had occasion to relate an incident that so naturally suggests it.

I am no more delighted with the season than you are. The absence of the sun, which has graced the spring with much less of his presence than he vouchsafed to the winter, has a very uncomfortable effect upon my frame. I feel an invincible aversion to employment, which I am yet constrained to fly to as my only remedy against something worse. If I do nothing, I am dejected; if I do any thing, I am weary; and that weariness is best described by the word lassitude, which of all weariness in the world is the most oppressive But enough of myself and the weather.

The blow we have struck in the West Indies will, I suppose, be decisive, at least for the present year, and so far as that part of our possessions is concerned in the present conflict. But the newswriters, and their correspondents, disgust me and make me sick. One victory, after such a long series of adverse occurrences, has filled them with self-conceit, and impertinent boasting; and while

* Here Cowper transcribed the letter written from Passy, by the American ambassador Franklin, in praise of his book.

Rodney is almost accounted a Methodist for ascribing his success to Providence, men who have renounced all dependence upon such a friend, without whose assistance nothing can be done, threaten to drive the French out of the sea, laugh at the Spaniards, sneer at the Dutch, and are to carry the world before them. Our enemies are apt to brag, and we deride them for it; but we can sing as loud as they can, in the same key, and no doubt wherever our papers go, shall be derided in our turn. An Englishman's true glory should be, to do his business well, and say little about it; but he disgraces himself when he puffs his prowess, as if he had finished his task, when he has but just begun it. Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *June* 12, 1782.

EVERY extraordinary occurrence in our lives affords us an opportunity to learn, if we will, something more of our own hearts and tempers, than we were before aware of. It is easy to promise ourselves beforehand, that our conduct shall be wise, or moderate, or resolute, on any given occasion. But when that occasion occurs, we do not always find it easy to make good the promise: such a difference there is between theory and practice. Perhaps this is no new remark; but it is not a whit the worse for being old, if it be true.

Before I had published, I said to myself—you and I, Mr. Cowper, will not concern ourselves much about what the critics may say of our book. But having once sent my wits for a venture, I soon became anxious about the issue, and found that I could not be satisfied with a warm place in my own good graces, unless my friends were pleased with me as much as I pleased myself. Meeting with their approbation, I began to feel the workings of ambition. It is well, said I, that my friends are pleased, but friends are sometimes partial, and mine, I have reason to think, are not altogether free from bias. Methinks I should like to hear a stranger or two speak well of me. I was presently gratified by the approbation of the London Magazine, and the Gentleman's, particularly by that of the former, and by the plaudit of Dr. Franklin. By the way, magazines are publications we have but little respect for, till we ourselves are chronicled in them, and then they assume an importance in our esteem which before we could not allow them. But the Monthly Review, the most formidable of all my judges, is still behind. What will that critical Rhadamanthus say, when my shivering genius shall appear before him? Still he keeps me in hot water, and I must wait another month for his award. Alas! when I wish for a favourable sentence from that quarter (to confess a weakness that I should not confess to all), I feel myself not a little influenced by a tender regard to my reputation here, even among my neighbours at Olney. Here are watch-makers, who themselves are wits, and who at present perhaps think me one. Here is a carpenter and a baker, and not to mention others, here is your idol Mr. ———, whose smile is fame. All these read the Monthly Review, and all these will set me down for a dunce, if those terrible critics should show them the example. But oh! wherever else I am accounted dull, dear Mr. Griffith, let me pass for a genius at Olney.

We are sorry for little William's illness. It is however the privilege of infancy to recover almost immediately what it has lost by sickness. We are sorry too for Mr. ———'s dangerous condition. But he that is well prepared for the great journey can not enter on it too soon for himself, though his friends will weep at his departure.

Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *July* 16, 1782.

THOUGH some people pretend to be clever in the way of prophetical forecast, and to have a peculiar talent of sagacity, by which they can divine the meaning of a providential dispensation, while its consequences are yet in embryo—I do not. There is at this time to be found I suppose in the cabinet, and in both houses, a greater assemblage of able men, both as speakers and counsellors, than ever were contemporary in the same land. A man not accustomed to trace the workings of Providence, as recorded in Scripture, and that has given no attention to this particular subject, while employed in the study of profane history, would assert boldly, that it is a token for good, that much may be expected from them, and that the country, though heavily afflicted, is not to be despaired of, distinguished as she is by so many characters of the highest class. Thus he would say, and I do not deny, that the event might justify his skill in prognostics. God works by means, and in a case of great national perplexity and distress, wisdom and political ability seem to be the only natural means of deliverance. But a mind more religiously inclined, and perhaps a little tinctured with melancholy, might, with equal probability of success, hazard a conjecture directly opposite —Alas! what is the wisdom of man, especially when he trusts in it as the only God of his confidence?—When I consider the general contempt that is poured upon all things sacred, the profusion, the dissipation, the knavish cunning of some, the rapacity of others, and the impenitence of all; I am rather inclined to fear that God, who honours himself by

bringing human glory to shame, and by disappointing the expectations of those whose trust is in creatures, has signalized the present day as a day of much human sufficiency and strength, has brought together from all quarters of the land the most illustrious men to be found in it, only that he may prove the vanity of idols, and that when a great empire is falling, and he has pronounced a sentence of ruin against it, the inhabitants, be they weak or strong, wise or foolish, must fall with it. I am rather confirmed in this persuasion by observing that these luminaries of the state had no sooner fixed themselves in the political heaven, than the fall of the brightest of them shook all the rest. The arch of their power was no sooner struck than the key-stone slipped out of its place; those that were closest in connexion with it followed, and the whole building, new as it is, seems to be already a ruin. If a man should hold this language, who could convict him of absurdity? The marquis of Rockingham is minister—all the world rejoices, anticipating success in war and a glorious peace.—The marquis of Rockingham is dead—all the world is afflicted, and relapses into its former despondence. What does this prove, but that the marquis was their Almighty, and that now he is gone, they know no other? But let us wait a little, they will find another—Perhaps the duke of Portland, or perhaps the unpopular ———, whom they now represent as a devil, may obtain that honour. Thus God is forgot; and when he is, his judgments are generally his remembrancers.

How shall I comfort you upon the subject of your present distress? Pardon me that I find myself obliged to smile at it, because who but yourself would be distressed upon such an occasion? You have behaved politely, and like a gentleman; you have hospitably offered your house to a stranger, who could not, in your neighbourhood at least, have been comfortably accommodated any where else. He, by neither refusing nor accepting an offer that did him too much honour, has disgraced himself, but not you. I think for the future you must be cautious of laying yourself open to a stranger, and never again expose yourself to incivilities from an archdeacon you are not acquainted with.

Though I did not mention it, I felt with you what you suffered by the loss of Miss ————. I was only silent because I could minister no consolation to you on such a subject, but what I knew your mind to be already stored with. Indeed, the application of comfort in such cases is a nice business, and perhaps when best managed might as well be let alone. I remember reading many years ago a long treatise on the subject of consolation, written in French; the author's name I forgot, but I wrote these words in the margin—Special consolation! at least for a Frenchman, who is a creature the most easily comforted of any in the world!

We are as happy in lady Austen, and she in us, as ever—having a lively imagination, and being passionately desirous of consolidating all into one family (for she has taken her leave of London), she has just sprung a project which serves at least to amuse us, and make us laugh—it is to hire Mr. Small's house, on the top of Clifton-hill, which is large, commodious, and handsome, will hold us conveniently, and any friends who may occasionally favour us with a visit—the house is furnished, but, if it can be hired without the furniture, will let for a trifle—your sentiments, if you please, upon this *demarche!*

I send you my last frank—our best love attend you individually, and all together. I give you joy of a happy change in the season, and myself also. I have filled four sides in less time than two would have cost me a week ago—such is the effect of sunshine upon such a butterfly as I am.

Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Aug.* 3, 1782.

Entertaining some hope that Mr. Newton's next letter would furnish me with the means of satisfying your inquiry on the subject of Dr. Johnson's opinion, I have till now delayed my answer to your last; but the information is not yet come, Mr. Newton having intermitted a week more than usual, since his last writing. When I receive it, favourable or not, it shall be communicated to you; but I am not over sanguine in my expectations from that quarter. Very learned and very critical heads are hard to please. He may perhaps treat me with lenity for the sake of the subject and design, but the composition I think will hardly escape his censure. Though all doctors may not be of the same mind, there is one doctor at least, whom I have lately discovered, my professed admirer. He too, like Johnson, was with difficulty persuaded to read, having an aversion to all poetry, except the Night Thoughts, which on a certain occasion, when being confined on board a ship he had no other employment, he got by heart. He was however prevailed upon, and read me several times over; so that if my volume had sailed with him, instead of Dr. Young's, I perhaps might have occupied that shelf in his memory which he then allotted to the Doctor.

It is a sort of paradox, but it is true; we are never more in danger than when we think ourselves most secure, nor in reality more secure than when we seem to be most in danger. Both sides of this apparent contradiction were lately verified in my experience—Passing from the green-house

to the barn, I saw three kittens (for we have so many in our retinue) looking with fixed attention on something, which lay on the threshold of a door nailed up. I took but little notice of them at first, but a loud hiss engaged me to attend more closely, when behold—a viper! the largest that I remember to have seen, rearing itself, darting its forked tongue, and ejaculating the aforesaid hiss at the nose of a kitten almost in contact with his lips. I ran into the hall for a hoe with a long handle, with which I intended to assail him, and returning in a few seconds missed him; he was gone, and I feared had escaped me. Still however the kitten sat watching immoveably upon the same spot. I concluded therefore that, sliding between the door and the threshold, he had found his way out of the garden into the yard.—I went round immediately, and there found him in close conversation with the old cat, whose curiosity being excited by so novel an appearance, inclined her to pat his head repeatedly with her fore foot, with her claws however sheathed, and not in anger, but in the way of philosophic inquiry and examination. To prevent her falling a victim to so laudable an exercise of her talents, I interposed a moment with the hoe, and performed upon him an act of decapitation, which though not immediately mortal, proved so in the end. Had he slid into the passages, where it is dark, or had he, when in the yard, met with no interruption from the cat, and secreted himself in any of the outhouses, it is hardly possible but that some of the family must have been bitten; he might have been trodden upon without being perceived, and have slipped away before the sufferer could have distinguished what foe had wounded him. Three years ago we discovered one in the same place, which the barber slew with a trowel.

Our proposed removal to Mr. Small's was, as you suppose, a jest, or rather a joco-serious matter. We never looked upon it as entirely feasible, yet we saw in it something so like practicability, that we did not esteem it altogether unworthy of our attention. It was one of those projects which people of lively imaginations play with, and admire for a few days, and then break in pieces. Lady Austen returned on Thursday from London, where she spent the last fortnight, and whither she was called by an unexpected opportunity to dispose of the remainder of her lease. She has therefore no longer any connexion with the great city, and no house but at Olney. Her abode is to be at the vicarage, where she has hired as much room as she wants, which she will embellish with her own furniture, and which she will occupy as soon as the minister's wife has produced another child, which is expected to make its entry in October.

Mr. Bull, a dissenting minister of Newport, a learned, ingenious, good-natured, pious friend of ours, who sometimes visits us, and whom we visited last week, has put into my hands three volumes of French poetry, composed by Madame Guion—a quietist say you, and a fanatic, I will have nothing to do with her——'Tis very well, you are welcome to have nothing to do with her, but in the mean time her verse is the only French verse I ever read that I found agreeable; there is a neatness in it equal to that which we applaud with so much reason in the compositions of Prior. I have translated several of them, and shall proceed in my translations, till I have filled a Lilliputian paper-book I happen to have by me, which when filled, I shall present to Mr. Bull. He is her passionate admirer, rode twenty miles to see her picture in the house of a stranger, which stranger politely insisted on his acceptance of it, and it now hangs over his chimney. It is a striking portrait, too characteristic not to be a strong resemblance, and, were it encompassed with a glory, instead of being dressed in a nun's hood, might pass for the face of an angel. Yours, W. C.

TO LADY AUSTEN.

To watch the storms and hear the sky
Give all our almanacks the lie;
To shake with cold, and see the plains
In autumn drown'd with wintry rains;
'Tis thus I spend my moments here,
And wish myself a Dutch mynheer;
I then should have no need of wit;
For lumpish Hollander unfit!
Nor should I then repine at mud,
Or meadows delug'd with a flood;
But in a bog live well content,
And find it just my element;
Should be a clod, and not a man,
Nor wish in vain for Sister Ann,
With charitable aid to drag
My mind out of its proper quag;
Should have the genius of a boor,
And no ambition to have more.

MY DEAR SISTER,

You see my beginning—I do not know but in time I may proceed even to the printing of half-penny ballads—Excuse the coarseness of my paper—I wasted such a quantity before I could accomplish any thing legible, that I could not afford finer. I intend to employ an ingenious mechanic of the town to make me a longer case; for you may observe that my lines turn up their tails like Dutch mastiffs, so difficult do I find it to make the two halves exactly coincide with each other.

We wait with impatience for the departure of this unseasonable flood. We think of you, and talk of you, but we can do no more, till the waters subside. I do not think our correspondence should drop because we are within a mile of each

other. It is but an imaginary approximation, the flood having in reality as effectually parted us, as if the British Channel rolled between us.

Yours, my dear sister, with Mrs. Unwin's best love.

Aug. 12, 1782. W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM BULL.

Oct. 27, 1782.

Mon aimable et très cher Ami,

It is not in the power of chaises or chariots to carry you where my affections will not follow you; if I heard that you were gone to finish your days in the moon, I should not love you the less; but should contemplate the place of your abode, as often as it appeared in the heavens, and say—Farewell, my friend, for ever! Lost, but not forgotten! Live happy in thy lantern, and smoke the remainder of thy pipes in peace! Thou art rid of earth, at least of all its cares, and so far can I rejoice in thy removal; and as to the cares that are to be found in the moon, I am resolved to suppose them lighter than those below—heavier they can hardly be.

Madame Guion is finished, but not quite transcribed.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Nov.* 4, 1782.

You are too modest; though your last consisted of three sides only, I am certainly a letter in your debt. It is possible that this present writing may prove as short. Yet, short as it may be, it will be a letter, and make me creditor, and you my debtor. A letter indeed ought not to be estimated by the length of it, but by the contents, and how can the contents of any letter be more agreeable than your last?

You tell me that John Gilpin made you laugh tears, and that the ladies at court are delighted with my poems. Much good may they do them! May they become as wise as the writer wishes them, and they will be much happier than he! I know there is in the book that wisdom which cometh from above, because it was from above that I received it. May they receive it too! For whether they drink it out of the cistern, or whether it falls upon them immediately from the clouds, as it did on me, it is all one. It is the water of life, which whosoever drinketh shall thirst no more. As to the famous horseman above-mentioned, he and his feats are an inexhaustible source of merriment. At least we find him so, and seldom meet without refreshing ourselves with the recollection of them. You are perfectly at liberty to deal with them as you please. *Auctore tantùm anonymo imprimantur;* and when printed, send me a copy.

I congratulate you on the discharge of your duty and your conscience, by the pains you have taken for the relief of the prisoners.—You proceeded wisely, yet courageously, and deserved better success. Your labours however will be remembered elsewhere, when you shall be forgotten here; and if the poor folks at Chelmsford should never receive the benefit of them, you will yourself receive it in heaven. It is pity that men of fortune should be determined to acts of beneficence sometimes by popular whim, or prejudice, and sometimes by motives still more unworthy. The liberal subscription raised in behalf of the widows of the seamen lost in the Royal George was an instance of the former. At least a plain, short, and sensible letter in the newspaper convinced me at the time, that it was an unnecessary and injudicious collection: and the difficulty you found in effectuating your benevolent intentions on this occasion, constrains me to think that had it been an affair of more notoriety than merely to furnish a few poor fellows with a little fuel to preserve their extremities from the frost, you would have succeeded better. Men really pious delight in doing good by stealth. But nothing less than an ostentatious display of bounty will satisfy mankind in general. I feel myself disposed to furnish you with an opportunity to shine in secret. We do what we can. But that *can* is little. You have rich friends, are eloquent on all occasions, and know how to be pathetic on a proper one. The winter will be severely felt at Olney by many, whose sobriety, industry, and honesty, recommend them to charitable notice: and we think we could tell such persons as Mr. ———, or Mr. ———, half a dozen tales of distress, that would find their way into hearts as feeling as theirs. You will do as you see good; and we in the mean time shall remain convinced, that you will do your best. Lady Austen will no doubt do something; for she has great sensibility and compassion.

Yours, my dear Unwin, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR WILLIAM, *Nov.* 18, 1782.

On the part of the poor, and on our part, be pleased to make acknowledgments, such as the occasion calls for, to our beneficent friend Mr. ——. I call him ours, because having experienced his kindness to myself in a former instance, and in the present his disinterested readiness to succour the distressed, my ambition will be satisfied with nothing less. He may depend upon the strictest secrecy; no creature shall hear him men-

doned, either now or hereafter, as the person from whom we have received this bounty. But when I speak of him, or hear him spoken of by others, which sometimes happens, I shall not forget what is due to so rare a character. I wish, and your mother wishes it too, that he could sometimes take us in his way to ——; he will find us happy to receive a person whom we must needs account it an honour to know. We shall exercise our best discretion in the disposal of the money; but in this town, where the Gospel has been preached so many years, where the people have been favoured so long with laborious and conscientious ministers, it is not an easy thing to find those who make no profession of religion at all, and are yet proper objects of charity. The profane, are so profane, so drunken, dissolute, and in every respect worthless, that to make them partakers of his bounty would be to abuse it. We promise however that none shall touch it but such as are miserably poor, yet at the same time industrious and honest, two characters frequently united here, where the most watchful and unremitting labour will hardly procure them bread. We make none but the cheapest laces, and the price of them is fallen almost to nothing. Thanks are due to yourself likewise, and are hereby accordingly rendered, for waiving your claim in behalf of your own parishioners. You are always with them, and they are always, at least some of them, the better for your residence among them. Olney is a populous place, inhabited chiefly by the half-starved and the ragged of the earth, and it is not possible for our small party and small ability to extend their operations so far as to be much felt among such numbers. Accept therefore your share of their gratitude, and be convinced that when they pray for a blessing upon those who relieved their wants, He that answers that prayer, and when he answers, will remember his servant at Stock.

I little thought when I was writing the history of John Gilpin, that he would appear in print—I intended to laugh, and to make two or three others laugh, of whom you were one. But now all the world laughs, at least if they have the same relish for a tale ridiculous in itself, and quaintly told, as we have—Well—they do not always laugh so innocently, and at so small an expense—for in a world like this, abounding with subjects for satire, and with satirical wits to mark them, a laugh that hurts nobody has at least the grace of novelty to recommend it. Swift's darling motto was, *Vive la bagatelle*—a good wish for a philosopher of his complexion, the greater part of whose wisdom, whencesoever it came, most certainly came not from above. *La bagatelle* has no enemy in me, though it has neither so warm a friend, nor so able a one, as it had in him. If I trifle, and merely trifle, it is because I am reduced to it by necessity—a melancholy that nothing so effectually disperses, engages me sometimes in the arduous task of being merry by force. And, strange as it may seem, the most ludicrous lines I ever wrote have been written in the saddest mood, and but for that saddest mood, perhaps had never been written at all.

I hear from Mrs. Newton, that some great persons have spoken with great approbation of a certain book—Who they are, and what they have said, I am to be told in a future letter. The Monthly Reviewers in the mean time have satisfied me well enough.

Yours, my dear William, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,

DOCTOR BEATTIE is a respectable character. I account him a man of sense, a philosopher, a scholar, a person of distinguished genius, and a good writer. I believe him too a Christian: with a profound reverence for the Scripture, with great zeal and ability to enforce the belief of it (both which he exerts with the candour and good manners of a gentleman;) he seems well entitled to that allowance; and to deny it him, would impeach one's own right to the appellation. With all these good things to recommend him, there can be no dearth of sufficient reasons to read his writings. You favoured me some years since with one of his volumes; by which I was both pleased and instructed: and I beg that you will send me the new one, when you can conveniently spare it, or rather bring it yourself, while the swallows are yet upon the wing; for the summer is going down apace.

You tell me you have been asked, if I am intent upon another volume? I reply—not at present, not being convinced that I have met with sufficient encouragement. I account myself happy in having pleased a few, but am not rich enough to despise the many. I do not know what sort of market my commodity has found, but if a slack one I must beware how I make a second attempt. My bookseller will not be willing to incur a certain loss; and I can as little afford it. Notwithstanding what I have said, I write, and am even now writing for the press. I told you that I had translated several of the poems of Madame Guion. I told you too, or I am mistaken, that Mr. Bull designed to print them. That gentleman is gone to the sea-side with Mrs. Wilberforce, and will be absent six weeks. My intention is to surprise him at his return with the addition of as much more translation as I have already given him. This, however, is still less likely to be a popular work than my former. Men, that have no religion, would despise it; and men, that have no religious

experience, would not understand it. But the strain of simple and unaffected piety in the original is sweet beyond expression. She sings like an angel, and for that very reason has found but few admirers. Other things I write too, as you will see on the other side, but these merely for my amusement. W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR WILLIAM, *Jan.* 19, 1783.

Not to retaliate, but for want of opportunity, I have delayed writing. From a scene of most uninterrupted retirement, we have passed at once into a state of constant engagement; not that our society is much multiplied. The addition of an individual has made all this difference. Lady Austen and we pass our days alternately at each other's *chateau*. In the morning I walk with one or other of the ladies, and in the afternoon wind thread. Thus did Hercules and Samson, and thus do I; and were both those heroes living, I should not fear to challenge them to a trial of skill in that business, or doubt to beat them both. As to killing lions, and other amusements of that kind, with which they were so delighted, I should be their humble servant, and beg to be excused.

Having no frank, I can not send you Mr. ——'s two letters as I intended. We corresponded as long as the occasion required, and then ceased. Charmed with his good sense, politeness, and liberality to the poor, I was indeed ambitious of continuing a correspondence with him, and told him so. Perhaps I had done more prudently had I never proposed it. But warm hearts are not famous for wisdom, and mine was too warm to be very considerate on such an occasion. I have not heard from him since, and have long given up all expectation of it. I know he is too busy a man to have leisure for me, and ought to have recollected it sooner. He found time to do much good, and to employ us as his agents in doing it, and that might have satisfied me. Though laid under the strictest injunctions of secrecy, both by him, and by you on his behalf, I consider myself as under no obligation to conceal from you the remittances he made. Only, in my turn, I beg leave to request secrecy on your part, because, intimate as you are with him, and highly as he values you, I can not yet be sure that the communication would please him, his delicacies on this subject being as singular as his benevolence. He sent forty pounds, twenty at a time. Olney has not had such a friend this many a day; nor has there been an instance at any time of a few poor families so effectually relieved, or so completely encouraged to the pursuit of that honest industry by which, their debts being paid, and the parents and children comfortably clothed, they are now enabled to maintain themselves. Their labour was almost in vain before; but now it answers; it earns them bread, and all their other wants are plentifully supplied.

I wish, that by Mr. ————'s assistance, your purpose in behalf of the prisoners may be effectuated. A pen so formidable as his might do much good, if properly directed. The dread of a bold censure is ten times more moving than the most eloquent persuasion. They that can not feel for others, are the persons of all the world who feel most sensibly for themselves.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Feb.* 8, 1783.

When I contemplate the nations of the earth, and their conduct towards each other, through the medium of a scriptural light, my opinions of them are exactly like your own. Whether they do good or do evil, I see them acting under the permission or direction of that Providence who governs the earth, whose operations are as irresistible as they are silent and unsuspected. So far we are perfectly agreed; and howsoever we may differ upon inferior parts of the subject, it is, as you say, an affair of no great consequence. For instance, you think the peace a better than we deserve, and in a certain sense I agree with you: as a sinful nation we deserve no peace at all, and have reason enough to be thankful that the voice of war is at any rate put to silence.

Mr. S————'s last child is dead; it lived a little while in a world of which it knew nothing, and has gone to another, in which it has already become wiser than the wisest it has left behind. The earth is a grain of sand, but the interests of man are commensurate with the heavens.

Mrs. Unwin thanks Mrs. Newton for her kind letter, and for executing her commissions. We truly love you both, and think of you often.

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Feb.* 13 *and* 20, 1783.

In writing to you I never want a subject. Self is always at hand, and self with its concerns is always interesting to a friend.

You may think, perhaps, that having commenced poet by profession, I am always writing verses. Not so—I have written nothing, at least finished nothing, since I published—except a certain facetious history of John Gilpin, which Mr. Unwin would send to the Public Advertiser. Perhaps you might read it without suspecting the author.

My book procures me favours, which my modesty will not permit me to specify, except one which, modest as I am, I can not suppress—a very handsome letter from Dr. Franklin at Passy.—These fruits it has brought me.

I have been refreshing myself with a walk in the garden, where I find that January (who according to Chaucer was the husband of May) being dead, February has married the widow.

Yours, &c. W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

Olney, Feb. 20, 1783.

Suspecting that I should not have hinted at Dr. Franklin's encomium under any other influence than that of vanity, I was several times on the point of burning my letter for that very reason. But not having time to write another by the same post, and believing that you would have the grace to pardon a little self-complacency in an author on so trying an occasion, I let it pass. One sin naturally leads to another, and a greater; and thus it happens now, for I have no way to gratify your curiosity, but by transcribing the letter in question. It is addressed, by the way, not to me, but to an acquaintance of mine, who had transmitted the volume to him without my knowledge.

Sir, *Passy, May* 8, 1782.

I received the letter you did me the honour of writing to me, and am much obliged by your kind present of a book. The relish for reading of poetry had long since left me, but there is something so new in the manner, so easy, and yet so correct in the language, so clear in the expression, yet concise, and so just in the sentiments, that I have read the whole with great pleasure, and some of the pieces more than once. I beg you to accept my thankful acknowledgments, and to present my respects to the author.

Your most obedient humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

my dear friend,

Great revolutions happen in this Ant's nest of ours. One Emmet of illustrious character and great abilities pushes out another; parties are formed, they range themselves in formidable opposition, they threaten each other's ruin, they cross over and are mingled together, and like the coruscations of the Northern Aurora amuse the spectator, at the same time that by some they are supposed to be forerunners of a general dissolution.

There are political earthquakes as well as natural ones, the former less shocking to the eye, but not always less fatal in their influence than the latter. The image which Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream was made up of heterogeneous and incompatible materials, and accordingly broken. Whatever is so formed must expect a like catastrophe.

I have an etching of the late Chancellor hanging over the parlour chimney. I often contemplate it, and call to mind the day when I was intimate with the original. It is very like him, but he is disguised by his hat, which, though fashionable, is awkward; by his great wig, the tie of which is hardly discernible in profile; and by his band and gown, which give him an appearance clumsily sacerdotal. Our friendship is dead and buried, yours is the only surviving one of all with which I was once honoured.

Adieu, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

my dear friend, *April* 5, 1783.

When one has a letter to write, there is nothing more useful than to make a beginning. In the first place, because unless it be begun, there is no good reason to hope it will ever be ended; and secondly, because the beginning is half the business; it being much more difficult to put the pen in motion at first, than to continue the progress of it, when once moved.

Mrs. C————'s illness, likely to prove mortal, and seizing her at such a time, has excited much compassion in my breast, and in Mrs. Unwin's, both for her and her daughter. To have parted with a child she loves so much, intending soon to follow her; to find herself arrested before she could set out, and at so great a distance from her most valued relations, her daughter's life too threatened by a disorder not often curable, are circumstances truly affecting. She has indeed much natural fortitude, and to make her condition still more tolerable, a good Christian hope for her support. But so it is, that the distresses of those who least need our pity excite it most; the amiableness of the character engages our sympathy, and we mourn for persons for whom perhaps we might more reasonably rejoice. There is still however a possibility that she may recover; an event we *must* wish for, though for her to depart would be far better. Thus we would always withhold from the skies those who alone can reach them; at least till we are ready to bear them company.

Present our love, if you please, to Miss C———. I saw in the Gentleman's Magazine for last month an account of a physician who has discovered a new method of treating consumptive cases, which has succeeded wonderfully in the trial. He finds the seat of the distemper in the stomach, and cures it principally by emetics. The old method of encountering the disorder has proved so unequal to the task, that I should be much inclined to any new practice, that comes well recommended. He is spoken of as a sensible and judicious man, but his name I have forgot.

Our love to all under your roof, and in particular to Miss Catlett, if she is with you.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

May 5, 1783.

You may suppose that I did not hear Mr.——— preach, but I heard of him. How different is that plainness of speech, which a spiritual theme requires, from that vulgar dialect which this gentleman has mistaken for it! Affectation of every sort is odious, especially in a minister, and more especially an affectation that betrays him into expressions fit only for the mouths of the illiterate. Truth indeed needs no ornament, neither does a beautiful person; but to clothe it therefore in rags, when a decent habit was at hand, would be esteemed preposterous and absurd. The best proportioned figure may be made offensive by beggary and filth; and even truths, which came down from Heaven, though they can not forego their nature, may be disguised and disgraced by unsuitable language. It is strange that a pupil of yours should blunder thus. You may be consoled however by reflecting, that he could not have erred so grossly, if he had not totally and wilfully departed both from your instruction and example. Were I to describe your style in two words, I should call it plain and neat, *simplicem munditiis*, and I do not know how I could give it juster praise, or pay it a greater compliment. He that speaks to be understood by a congregation of rustics, and yet in terms that would not offend academical ears, has found the happy medium. This is certainly practicable to men of taste and judgment, and the practice of a few proves it. *Hactenus de Concionando.*

We are truly glad to hear that Miss C——— is better, and heartily wish you more promising accounts from Scotland. *Debemur morti nos nostraque.* We all acknowledge the debt, but are seldom pleased when those we love are required to pay it. The demand will find you prepared for it. Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *May* 12, 1783.

A LETTER written from such a place as this is a creation; and creation is a work for which mere man is very indifferently qualified. *Ex nihilo nihil fit*, is a maxim that applies itself in every case where deity is not concerned. With this view of the matter, I should charge myself with extreme folly for pretending to work without materials, did I not know, that although nothing could be the result, even that nothing will be welcome. If I can tell you no news, I can tell you at least that I esteem you highly; that my friendship with you and yours is the only balm of my life; a comfort sufficient to reconcile me to an existence destitute of every other. This is not the language of to-day, only the effect of a transient cloud suddenly brought over me, and suddenly to be removed, but punctually expressive of my habitual frame of mind, such as it has been these ten years.

In the Review of last month, I met with an account of a sermon preached by Mr. Paley, at the consecration of his friend, Bishop Law. The critic admires and extols the preacher, and devoutly prays the lord of the harvest to send forth more such labourers into his vineyard. I rather differ from him in opinion, not being able to conjecture in what respect the vineyard will be benefited by such a measure. He is certainly ingenious, and has stretched his ingenuity to the uttermost in order to exhibit the church established, consisting of bishops, priests, and deacons, in the most favourable point of view. I lay it down for a rule, that when much ingenuity is necessary to gain an argument credit, that argument is unsound at bottom. So is his, and so are all the petty devices by which he seeks to enforce it. He says first, 'that the appointment of various orders in the church is attended with this good consequence, that each class of people is supplied with a clergy of their own level and description, with whom they may live and associate on terms of equality.' But in order to effect this good purpose, there ought to be at least three parsons in every parish, one for the gentry, one for the traders and mechanics, and one for the lowest of the vulgar. Neither is it easy to find many parishes, where the laity at large have any society with their minister at all. This therefore is fanciful, and a mere invention. In the next place he says it gives a dignity to the ministry itself, and the clergy share in the respect paid to their superiors. Much good may such participation do them! They themselves know how little it amounts to. The dignity a parson derives from the lawn sleeves and square cap of his diocesan will never endanger his humility.

Pope says truly———

> Worth makes the man, and want of it the fellow;
> The rest is all but leather or prunello.

Again—'Rich and splendid situations in the church have been justly regarded as prizes, held out to invite persons of good hopes, and ingenuous attainments.' Agreed. But the prize held out in the Scripture is of a very different kind; and our ecclesiastical baits are too often snapped by the worthless, and persons of no attainments at all. They are indeed incentives to avarice and ambition, but not to those acquirements by which only the ministerial function can be adorned—zeal for the salvation of men, humility, and self-denial. Mr. Paley and I therefore can not agree.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

May 26, 1783.

I feel for my uncle, and do not wonder that his loss afflicts him. A connexion that has subsisted so many years could not be rent asunder without great pain to the survivor. I hope however and doubt not but when he has had a little more time for recollection, he will find that consolation in his own family, which is not the lot of every father to be blessed with. It seldom happens that married persons live together so long, or so happily; but this, which one feels oneself ready to suggest as matter of alleviation, is the very circumstance that aggravates his distress; therefore he misses her the more, and feels that he can but ill spare her. It is however a necessary tax which all who live long must pay for their longevity, to lose many whom they would be glad to detain (perhaps those in whom all their happiness is centered), and to see them step into the grave before them. In one respect at least this is a merciful appointment: when life has lost that to which it owed its principal relish, we may ourselves the more cheerfully resign it. I beg you would present him with my most affectionate remembrance, and tell him, if you think fit, how much I wish that the evening of his long day may be serene and happy.

W. C.

TO THE REV. J. NEWTON.

May 31, 1783.

We rather rejoice than mourn with you on the occasion of Mrs. C———'s death. In the case of believers, death has lost his sting, not only with respect to those he takes away, but with respect to survivors also. Nature indeed will always suggest some causes of sorrow, when an amiable and Christian friend departs; but the Scripture, so many more, and so much more important reasons to rejoice, that on such occasions, perhaps more remarkably than on any other, sorrow is turned into joy. The law of our land is affronted if we say the king dies, and insists on it that he only demises. This, which is a fiction, where a monarch only is in question, in the case of a Christian is reality and truth. He only lays aside a body, which it is his privilege to be encumbered with no longer; and instead of dying, in that moment he begins to live. But this the world does not understand, therefore the kings of it must go on demising to the end of the chapter.* W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR WILLIAM, *June* 8, 1783.

Our severest winter, commonly called the spring, is now over, and I find myself seated in my favourite recess, the green-house. In such a situation, so silent, so shady, where no human foot is heard, and where only my myrtles presume to peep in at the window, you may suppose I have no interruption to complain of, and that my thoughts are perfectly at my command. But the beauties of the spot are themselves an interruption, my attention being called upon by those very myrtles, by a double row of grass pinks just beginning to blossom, and by a bed of beans already in bloom; and you are to consider it, if you please, as no small proof of my regard, that though you have so many powerful rivals, I disengage myself from them all, and devote this hour entirely to you.

You are not acquainted with the Rev. Mr. Bull, of Newport, perhaps it is as well for you that you are not. You would regret still more than you do, that there are so many miles interposed between us. He spends part of the day with us to-morrow. A dissenter, but a liberal one; a man of letters and of genius; master of a fine imagination, or rather not master of it; an imagination which, when he finds himself in the company he loves, and can confide in, runs away with him into such fields of speculation, as amuse and enliven every other imagination that has the happiness to be of the party! At other times he has a tender and delicate sort of melancholy in his disposition, not less agreeable in its way. No men are better qualified for companions in such a world as this, than men of such a temperament. Every scene of life has two sides, a dark and a bright one, and the mind that has an equal mixture of melancholy and

* The Task appears to have been begun between the writing of this letter and that which immediately follows.

vivacity is the best of all qualified for the contemplation of either. He can be lively without levity, and pensive without dejection. Such a man is Mr. Bull. But—he smokes tobacco—nothing is perfect————

Nihil est ab omni
Parte beatum.

On the other side I sent you a something, a song if you please, composed last Thursday—the incident happened the day before.*

Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *June* 13, 1783.

I THANK you for your Dutch communications. The suffrage of such respectable men must have given you much pleasure, a pleasure only to be exceeded by the consciousness you had before of having published truth, and of having served a good master by doing so.

I have always regretted that your ecclesiastical history went no further; I never saw a work that I thought more likely to serve the cause of truth, nor history applied to so good a purpose. The facts incontestable, the grand observations upon them all irrefragable, and the style, in my judgment, incomparably better than that of Robertson or Gibbon. I would give you my reasons for thinking so, if I had not a very urgent one for declining it. You have no ear for such music, whoever may be the performer. What you added, but never printed, is quite equal to what has appeared, which I think might have encouraged you to proceed, though you missed that freedom in writing which you found before. While you were at Olney this was at least possible; in a state of retirement you had leisure, without which I suppose Paul himself could not have written his Epistles. But those days are fled, and every hope of a continuation is fled with them.

The day of judgment is spoken of not only as a surprise, but a snare—a snare upon all the inhabitants of the earth. A difference indeed will obtain in favour of the godly, which is, that though a snare, a sudden, in some sense an unexpected, and in every sense an awful event, yet it will find *them* prepared to meet it. But the day being thus characterised, a wide field is consequently open to conjecture; some will look for it at one period, and some at another; we shall most of us prove at last to have been mistaken, and if any should prove to have guessed aright, they will reap no advantage, the felicity of their conjecture being incapable of proof till the day itself shall prove it. My own sentiments upon the subject appear to me perfectly scriptural, though I have no doubt that they differ totally from those of all who have ever thought about it; being however so singular, and of no importance to the happiness of mankind, and being moreover difficult to swallow, just in proportion as they are peculiar, I keep them to myself.

I am, and always have been, a great observer of natural appearances, but I think not a superstitious one. The fallibility of those speculations which lead men of fanciful minds to interpret Scripture by the contingencies of the day, is evident from this consideration, that what the God of the Scriptures has seen fit to conceal, he will not as the God of nature publish. He is one and the same in both capacities, and consistent with himself; and his purpose, if he designs a secret, impenetrable, in whatever way we attempt to open it. It is impossible however for an observer of natural phenomena not to be struck with the singularity of the present season. The fogs I mentioned in my last still continue, though till yesterday the earth was as dry as intense heat could make it. The sun continues to rise and set without his rays, and hardly shines at noon, even in a cloudless sky. At eleven last night the moon was a dull red, she was nearly at her highest elevation, and had the colour of heated brick. She would naturally, I know, have such an appearance looking through a misty atmosphere; but that such an atmosphere should obtain for so long a time, and in a country where it has not happened in my remembrance even in the winter, is rather remarkable. We have had more thunder storms than have consisted well with the peace of the fearful maidens in Olney, though not so many as have happened in places at no great distance, nor so violent. Yesterday morning, however, at seven o'clock, two fireballs burst either in the steeple or close to it. William Andrews saw them meet at that point, and immediately after saw such a smoke issue from the apertures in the steeple as soon rendered it invisible: the noise of the explosion surpassed all the noises I ever heard—you would have thought that a thousand sledge-hammers were battering great stones to powder, all in the same instant. The weather is still as hot, and the air as full of vapour, as if there had been neither rain nor thunder all the summer.

There was once a periodical paper published, called Mist's Journal: a name well adapted to the sheet before you. Misty however as I am, I do not mean to be mystical, but to be understood, like an almanack-maker, according to the letter. As a poet, nevertheless, I claim, if any wonderful event should follow, a right to apply all and every such post-prognostic, to the purposes of the tragic muse.

Yours, W. C.

* Here followed his song of the Rose.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *June* 17, 1783.

Your letter reached Mr. S——— while Mr. ——— was with him; whether it wrought any change in *his* opinion of that gentleman, as a preacher, I know not, but for my own part I give you full credit for the soundness and rectitude of *yours*. No man was ever scolded out of his sins. The heart, corrupt as it is, and because it is so, grows angry if it be not treated with some management and good manners, and scolds again. A surly mastiff will bear perhaps to be stroked, though he will growl even under that operation, but if you touch him roughly, he will bite. There is no grace that the spirit of self can counterfeit with more success than a religious zeal. A man thinks he is fighting for Christ, and he is fighting for his own notions. He thinks that he is skilfully searching the hearts of others, when he is only gratifying the malignity of his own, and charitably supposes his hearers destitute of all grace, that he may shine the more in his own eyes by comparison. When he has performed this notable task, he wonders that they are not converted: 'he has given it them soundly, and if they do not tremble, and confess that God is in him of a truth, he gives them up as reprobate, incorrigible, and lost for ever.' But a man that loves me, if he sees me in an error, will pity me, and endeavour calmly to convince me of it, and persuade me to forsake it. If he has great and good news to tell me, he will not do it angrily, and in much heat and discomposure of spirit. It is not therefore easy to conceive on what ground a minister can justify a conduct which only proves that he does not understand his errand. The absurdity of it would certainly strike him, if he were not himself deluded.

A people will always love a minister, if a minister seems to love his people. The old maxim, *Simile agit in simile*, is in no case more exactly verified: therefore you were beloved at Olney, and if you preached to the Chickesawes, and Chachtaws, would be equally beloved by them.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *June* 19, 1783.

The translation of your letters into *Dutch* was news that pleased me *much*. I intended plain prose, but a rhyme obtruded itself, and I became poetical when I least expected it. When you wrote those letters you did not dream that you were designed for an apostle to the Dutch. Yet so it proves, and such among many others are the advantages we derive from the art of printing: an art in which indisputably man was instructed by the same great teacher who taught him to embroider for the service of the sanctuary, and which amounts almost to as great a blessing as the gift of tongues.

The summer is passing away, and hitherto has hardly been either seen or felt. Perpetual clouds intercept the influence of the sun, and for the most part there is an autumnal coldness in the weather, though we are almost upon the eve of the longest day.

We are well, and always mindful of you; be mindful of us, and assured that we love you.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *July* 27, 1783.

You can not have more pleasure in receiving a letter from me, than I should find in writing it, were it not almost impossible in such a place to find a subject.

I live in a world abounding with incidents, upon which many grave, and perhaps some profitable observations might be made; but those incidents never reaching my unfortunate ears, both the entertaining narrative and the reflection it might suggest are to me annihilated and lost. I look back to the past week, and say, what did it produce? I ask the same question of the week preceding, and duly receive the same answer from both—nothing!—A situation like this, in which I am as unknown to the world, as I am ignorant of all that passes in it, in which I have nothing to do but to think, would exactly suit me, were my subjects of meditation as agreeable as my leisure is uninterrupted. My passion for retirement is not at all abated, after so many years spent in the most sequestered state, but rather increased. A circumstance I should esteem wonderful to a degree not to be accounted for, considering the condition of my mind, did I not know, that we think as we are made to think, and of course approve and prefer, as Providence, who appoints the bounds of our habitation, chooses for us. Thus am I both free and a prisoner at the same time. The world is before me; I am not shut up in the Bastile; there are no moats about my castle, no locks upon my gates, of which I have not the key—but an invisible, uncontrollable agency, a local attachment, an inclination more forcible than I ever felt, even to the place of my birth, serves me for prison walls, and for bounds which I can not pass. In former years I have known sorrow, and before I had ever tasted of spiritual trouble. The effect was an abhorrence of the scene in which I had suffered so much, and a weariness of those objects which I had so long looked at with an eye of despondency and dejection. But it is otherwise with

me now. The same cause subsisting, and in a much more powerful degree, fails to produce its natural effect. The very stones in the garden-walls are my intimate acquaintance. I should miss almost the minutest object, and be disagreeably affected by its removal, and am persuaded that were it possible I could leave this incommodious nook for a twelvemonth, I should return to it again with rapture, and be transported with the sight of objects which to all the world beside would be at least indifferent; some of them perhaps, such as the ragged thatch and the tottering walls of the neighbouring cottages, disgusting. But so it is, and it is so, because here is to be my abode, and because such is the appointment of *Him* that placed me in it—

Iste terrarum mihi præter omnes
Angulus ridet.

It is the place of all the world I love the most, not for any happiness it affords me, but because here I can be miserable with most convenience to myself, and with the least disturbance to others.

You wonder, and (I dare say) unfeignedly, because you do not think yourself entitled to such praise, that I prefer your style, as an historian, to that of the two most renowned writers of history the present day has seen. That you may not suspect me of having said more than my real opinion will warrant, I will tell you why. In your style I see no affectation. In every line of theirs I see nothing else. They disgust me always, Robertson with his pomp and his strut, and Gibbon with his finical and French manners. You are as correct as they. You express yourself with as much precision. Your words are ranged with as much propriety, but you do not set your periods to a tune. They discover a perpetual desire to exhibit themselves to advantage, whereas your subject engrosses you. They sing, and you say; which, as history is a thing to be said, and not sung, is, in my judgment, very much to your advantage. A writer that despises their tricks, and is yet neither inelegant nor inharmonious, proves himself, by that single circumstance, a man of superior judgment and ability to them both You have my reasons. I honour a manly character, in which good sense, and a desire of doing good, are the predominant features—but affectation is an emetic.

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM BULL.

August 3, 1783.

Your seaside situation, your beautiful prospects, your fine rides, and the sight of the palaces which you have seen, we have not envied you; but are glad that you have enjoyed them. Why should we envy any man? Is not our green-house a cabinet of perfumes? It is at this moment fronted with carnations and balsams, with mignionette and roses, with jessamine and woodbine, and wants nothing but your pipe to make it truly Arabian; a wilderness of sweets! The sofa is ended but not finished, a paradox which your natural acumen, sharpened by habits of logical attention, will enable you to reconcile in a moment. Do not imagine, however, that I lounge over it—on the contrary, I find it severe exercise to mould and fashion it to my mind!*

I was always an admirer of thunder-storms, even before I knew whose voice I heard in them; but especially an admirer of thunder rolling over the great waters. There is something singularly majestic in the sound of it at sea, where the eye and the ear have uninterrupted opportunity of observation, and the concavity above being made spacious reflects it with more advantage. I have consequently envied you your situation, and the enjoyment of those refreshing breezes that belong to it. We have indeed been regaled with some of those bursts of ethereal music.—The peals have been as loud, by the report of a gentleman who lived many years in the West Indies, as were ever heard in those islands, and the flashes as splendid. But when the thunder preaches, an horizon bounded by the ocean is the only sounding-board.

I have had but little leisure, strange as it may seem, and that little I devoted for a month after your departure to Madame Guion. I have made fair copies of all the pieces I have produced on this last occasion, and will put them into your hands when we meet. They are yours, to serve as you please; you may take and leave, as you like, for my purpose is already served; they have amused me, and I have no further demand upon them. The lines upon friendship, however, which were not sufficiently of a piece with the others, will not now be wanted. I have some other little things, which I will communicate when time shall serve; but I can not now transcribe them.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

My dear William, *August* 4, 1783.

I feel myself sensibly obliged by the interest you take in the success of my productions. Your feelings upon the subject are such as I should have myself, had I an opportunity of calling Johnson aside to make the enquiry you propose. But I am pretty well prepared for the worst, and so long as I have the opinion of a few capable judges in my favour, and am thereby convinced that I have neither disgraced myself nor my subject, shall not feel myself disposed to any extreme anxiety

* The prosecution of the Task seems to have been deferred till towards the end of October.

about the sale. To aim with success at the spiritual good of mankind, and to become popular by writing on scriptural subjects, were an unreasonable ambition, even for a poet to entertain in days like these. Verse may have many charms, but has none powerful enough to conquer the aversion of a dissipated age to such instruction. Ask the question therefore boldly, and be not mortified even though he should shake his head and drop his chin; for it is no more than we have reason to expect. We will lay the fault upon the vice of the times, and we will acquit the poet.

I am glad you were pleased with my Latin ode, and indeed with my English dirge as much as I was myself. The tune laid me under a disadvantage, obliging me to write in Alexandrines; which I suppose would suit no ear but a French one; neither did I intend any thing more than that the subject and the words should be sufficiently accommodated to the music. The ballad is a species of poetry I believe peculiar to this country, equally adapted to the drollest and the most tragical subjects. Simplicity and ease are its proper characteristics. Our forefathers excelled in it; but we moderns have lost the art. It is observed, that we have few good English odes. But to make amends, we have many excellent ballads, not inferior perhaps in true poetical merits to some of the very best odes that the Greek or Latin languages have to boast of. It is a sort of composition I was ever fond of, and if graver matters had not called me another way, should have addicted myself to it more than to any other. I inherit a taste for it from my father, who succeeded well in it himself, and who lived at a time when the best pieces in that way were produced. What can be prettier than Gay's ballad, or rather Swift's, Arbuthnot's, Pope's, and Gay's, in the What do ye call it—"'Twas when the seas were roaring?" I have been well informed that they all contributed, and that the most celebrated association of clever fellows this country ever saw, did not think it beneath them to unite their strength and abilities in the composition of a song. The success however answered their wishes. The ballads that Bourne has translated, beautiful in themselves, are still more beautiful in his version of them, infinitely surpassing in my judgment all that Ovid or Tibullus have left behind them. They are quite as elegant, and far more touching and pathetic than the tenderest strokes of either.

So much for ballads, and ballad writers—"A worthy subject," you will say, "for a man whose head might be filled with better things:" and it is filled with better things, but to so ill a purpose, that I thrust into it all manner of topics that may prove more amusing; as for instance I have two goldfinches, which in the summer occupy the green-house. A few days since, being employed in cleaning out their cages, I placed that which I had in hand upon the table, while the other hung against the wall: the windows and the doors stood wide open. I went to fill the fountain at the pump, and on my return was not a little surprised to find a goldfinch sitting on the top of the cage I had been cleaning, and singing to and kissing the goldfinch within. I approached him, and he discovered no fear; still nearer, and he discovered none. I advanced my hand towards him, and he took no notice of it. I seized him, and supposed I had caught a new bird, but casting my eye upon the other cage perceived my mistake. Its inhabitant, during my absence, had contrived to find an opening, where the wire had been a little bent, and made no other use of the escape it afforded him, than to salute his friend, and to converse with him more intimately than he had done before. I returned him to his proper mansion, but in vain. In less than a minute he had thrust his little person through the aperture again, and again perched upon his neighbour's cage, kissing him as at the first, and singing, as if transported with the fortunate adventure. I could not but respect such friendship, as for the sake of its gratification had twice declined an opportunity to be free, and consenting to their union, resolved that for the future one cage should hold them both. I am glad of such incidents. For at a pinch, and when I need entertainment, the versification of them serves to divert me.

I transcribe for you a piece of Madam Guion, not as the best, but as being shorter than many, and as good as most of them.

Yours ever, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Sept.* 7, 1783.

So long a silence needs an apology. I have been hindered by a three-weeks visit from our Hoxton friends, and by a cold and feverish complaint, which are but just removed.

The French poetess is certainly chargeable with the fault you mention, though I thought it not so glaring in the piece I sent you. I have endeavoured indeed, in all the translations I have made, to cure her of that evil, either by the suppression of passages exceptionable upon that account, or by a more sober and respectful manner of expression. Still however she will be found to have conversed familiarly with God, but I hope not fulsomely, nor so as to give reasonable disgust to a religious reader. That God should deal familiarly with man, or which is the same thing, that he should permit man to deal familiarly with him, seems not very difficult to conceive, or presumptuous to suppose, when some things are taken into consideration. Wo to the sinner that shall dare to take

a liberty with him that is not warranted by his word, or to which he himself has not encouraged him. When he assumed man's nature, he revealed himself as the friend of man, as the brother of every soul that loves him. He conversed freely with man while he was on earth, and as freely with him after his resurrection. I doubt not therefore that it is possible to enjoy an access to him even now unincumbered with ceremonious awe, easy, delightful, and without constraint. This however can only be the lot of those who make it the business of their lives to please him, and to cultivate communion with him. And then I presume there can be no danger of offence, because such a habit of the soul is of his own creation, and near as we come, we come no nearer to him than he is pleased to draw us. If we address him as children, it is because he tells us he is our father. If we unbosom ourselves to him as to a friend, it is because he calls us friends; and if we speak to him in the language of love, it is because he first used it, thereby teaching us that it is the language he delights to hear from his people. But I confess that through the weakness, the folly, and corruption of human nature, this privilege, like all other Christian privileges, is liable to abuse. There is a mixture of evil in every thing we do, indulgence encourages us to encroach, and while we exercise the rights of children, we become childish. Here I think is the point in which my authoress failed, and here it is that I have particularly guarded my translation, not afraid of representing her as dealing with God familiarly, but foolishly, irreverently, and without due attention to his majesty, of which she is somewhat guilty. A wonderful fault for such a woman to fall into, who spent her life in the contemplation of his glory, who seems to have been always impressed with a sense of it, and sometimes quite absorbed by the views she had of it. W. C.

TO THE REV. J. NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Sept.* 8, 1783.

Mrs. Unwin would have answered your kind note from Bedford, had not a pain in her side prevented her. I, who am her secretary upon such occasions, should certainly have answered it for her, but was hindered by illness, having been myself seized with a fever immediately after your departure. The account of your recovery gave us great pleasure, and I am persuaded that you will feel yourself repaid by the information that I give you of mine. The reveries your head was filled with, while your disorder was most prevalent, though they were but reveries, and the offspring of a heated imagination, afforded you yet a comfortable evidence of the predominant bias of your heart and mind to the best subjects. I had none such—indeed I was in no degree delirious, nor has any thing less than a fever really dangerous ever made me so. In this respect, if in no other, I may be said to have a strong head; and perhaps for the same reason that wine would never make me drunk, an ordinary degree of fever has no effect upon my understanding. The epidemic begins to be more mortal, as the autumn comes on, and in Bedfordshire it is reported, how truly I can not say, to be nearly as fatal as the plague. I heard lately of a clerk in a public office, whose chief employment it was for many years to administer oaths, who being light-headed in a fever, of which he died, spent the last week of his life in crying day and night—"So help you, God—kiss the book—give me a shilling." What a wretch in comparison with you!

Mr. S——— has been ill almost ever since you left us; and last Saturday, as on many foregoing Saturdays, was obliged to clap on a blister by way of preparation for his Sunday labours. He can not draw breath upon any other terms. If holy orders were always conferred upon such conditions, I question but even bishopricks themselves would want an occupant. But he is easy and cheerful.

I beg you will mention me kindly to Mr. Bacon, and make him sensible that if I did not write the paragraph he wished for, it was not owing to any want of respect for the desire he expressed, but to mere inability. If in a state of mind that almost disqualifies me for society, I could possibly wish to form a new connexion, I should wish to know him; but I never shall, and things being as they are, I do not regret it. You are my old friend, therefore I do not spare you; having known you in better days, I make you pay for any pleasure I might then afford you, by a communication of my present pains. But I have no claims of this sort upon Mr. Bacon.

Be pleased to remember us both, with much affection, to Mrs. Newton, and to her and your Eliza; to Miss C——— likewise, if she is with you. Poor Eliza droops and languishes, but in the land to which she is going, she will hold up her head and droop no more. A sickness that leads the way to everlasting life is better than the health of an antediluvian. Accept our united love My dear friend,

Sincerely yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Sept.* 23, 1783.

We are glad that having been attacked by a

fever, which has often proved fatal, and almost always leaves the sufferer debilitated to the last degree, you find yourself so soon restored to health, and your strength recovered. *Your* health and strength are useful to others, and in that view important in *his* account who dispenses both, and by your means a more precious gift than either. For my own part, though I have not been laid up, I have never been perfectly well since you left us. A smart fever, which lasted indeed but a few hours, succeeded by lassitude and want of spirits, that seemed still to indicate a feverish habit, has made for some time, and still makes me very unfit for my favourite occupations, writing and reading —— so that even a letter, and even a letter to you, is not without its burthen.

John ——— has had the epidemic, and has it still, but grows better. When he was first seized with it, he gave notice that he should die, but in this only instance of prophetic exertion he seems to have been mistaken; he has however been very near it. I should have told you, that poor John has been very ready to depart, and much comforted through his whole illness. He, you know, though a silent, has been a very steady professor. He indeed fights battles, and gains victories, but makes no noise. Europe is not astonished at his feats, foreign academies do not seek him for a member; he will never discover the art of flying, or send a globe of taffeta up to heaven. But he will go thither himself.

Since you went we dined with Mr. ———. I had sent him notice of our visit a week before, which like a contemplative, studious man, as he is, he put in his pocket and forgot. When we arrived, the parlour windows were shut, and the house had the appearance of being uninhabited. After waiting some time, however, the maid opened the door, and the master presented himself. It is hardly worth while to observe so repeatedly that his garden seems a spot contrived only for the growth of melancholy, but being always affected by it in the same way, I can not help it. He showed me a nook, in which he had placed a bench, and where he said he found it very refreshing to smoke his pipe and meditate. Here he sits, with his back against one brick wall, and his nose against another, which must you know be very refreshing, and greatly assist meditation. He rejoices the more in this niche, because it is an acquisition made at some expense, and with no small labour; several loads of earth were removed in order to make it, which loads of earth, had I the management of them, I should carry thither again, and fill up a place more fit in appearance to be a repository for the dead than the living. I would on no account put any man out of conceit with his innocent enjoyments, and therefore never tell him my thoughts upon this subject, but he is not seldom low spirited, and I can not but suspect that his situation helps to make him so.

I shall be obliged to you for Hawkesworth's Voyages when it can be sent conveniently. The long evenings are beginning, and nothing shortens them so effectually as reading aloud.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR WILLIAM, *Sept.* 29, 1783.

We are sorry that you and your household partake so largely of the ill effects of this unhealthy season. You are happy however in having hitherto escaped the epidemic fever, which has prevailed much in this part of the kingdom, and carried many off. Your mother and I are well. After more than a fortnight's indisposition, which slight appellation is quite adequate to the description of all I suffered, I am at length restored by a grain or two of emetic tartar. It is a tax I generally pay in autumn. By this time, I hope, a purer ether than we have seen for months, and these brighter suns than the summer had to boast, have cheered your spirits, and made your existence more comfortable. We are rational. But we are animal too, and therefore subject to the influences of the weather. The cattle in the fields show evident symptoms of lassitude and disgust in an unpleasant season; and we, their lords and masters, are constrained to sympathize with them: the only difference between us is, that they know not the cause of their dejection, and we do, but for our humiliation, are equally at a loss to cure it. Upon this account I have sometimes wished myself a philosopher. How happy, in comparison with myself, does the sagacious investigator of nature seem, whose fancy is ever employed in the invention of *hypotheses*, and his reason in the support of them! While he is accounting for the origin of the winds, he has no leisure to attend to their influence upon himself—and while he considers what the sun is made of, forgets that he has not shone for a month. One project indeed supplants another. The *vortices* of Descartes gave way to the gravitation of Newton, and this again is threatened by the electrical fluid of a modern. One generation blows bubbles, and the next breaks them. But in the mean time your philosopher is a happy man. He escapes a thousand inquietudes to which the indolent are subject, and finds his occupation, whether it be the pursuit of a butterfly, or a demonstration, the wholesomest exercise in the world. As he proceeds he applauds himself. His discoveries, though eventfully perhaps they prove but dreams, are to him realities. The world gaze at him, as he does at new phenomena in the heavens, and perhaps understands him as little.

But this does not prevent their praises, nor at all disturb him in the enjoyment of that self-complacence, to which his imaginary success entitles him. He wears his honours while he lives, and if another strips them off when he has been dead a century, it is no great matter; he can then make shift without them.

I have said a great deal upon this subject, and know not what it all amounts to. I did not intend a syllable of it when I began. But *currente calamo*, I stumbled upon it. My end is to amuse myself and you. The former of these two points is secured I shall be happy if I do not miss the latter.

By the way, what is your opinion of these air-balloons? I am quite charmed with the discovery. Is it not possible (do you suppose) to convey such a quantity of inflammable air in the stomach and abdomen, that the philosopher, no longer gravitating to a centre, shall ascend by his own comparative levity, and never stop till he has reached the medium exactly *in equilibrio* with himself? May he not by the help of a pasteboard rudder, attached to his posteriors, steer himself in that purer element with ease, and again by a slow and gradual discharge of his aerial contents, recover his former tendency to the earth, and descend without the smallest danger or inconvenience? These things are worth inquiry; and (I dare say) they will be inquired after as they deserve: The *pennæ non homini datæ* are likely to be less regretted than they were; and perhaps a flight of academicians and a covey of fine ladies may be no uncommon spectacle in the next generation. A letter which appeared in the public prints last week convinces me that the learned are not without hopes of some such improvement upon this discovery. The author is a sensible and ingenious man, and under a reasonable apprehension that the ignorant may feel themselves inclined to laugh upon a subject that affects himself with the utmost seriousness, with much good manners and management bespeaks their patience, suggesting many good consequences that may result from a course of experiments upon this machine, and amongst others, that it may be of use in ascertaining the shape of continents and islands, and the face of wide-extended and far distant countries; an end not to be hoped for, unless by these means of extraordinary elevation the human prospect may be immensely enlarged, and the philosopher, exalted to the skies, attain a view of the whole hemisphere at once. But whether he is to ascend by the mere inflation of his person, as hinted above, or whether in a sort of bandbox, supported upon balloons, is not yet apparent, nor (I suppose) even in his own idea perfectly decided.

Yours, my dear William, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *October* 6, 1783.

It is indeed a melancholy consideration, that the Gospel, whose direct tendency is to promote the happiness of mankind in the present life as well as the life to come, and which so effectually answers the design of its author, whenever it is well understood and sincerely believed, should, through the ignorance, the bigotry, the superstition of its professors, and the ambition of popes, and princes, the tools of popes, have produced incidentally so much mischief; only furnishing the world with a plausible excuse to worry each other, while they sanctified the worse cause with the specious pretext of zeal for the furtherance of the best.

Angels descend from Heaven to publish peace between man and his Maker—the Prince of Peace himself comes to confirm and establish it, and war, hatred, and desolation are the consequence. Thousands quarrel about the interpretation of a book which none of them understand. He that is slain dies firmly persuaded that the crown of martyrdom expects him; and he that slew him is equally convinced that he has done God service. In reality they are both mistaken, and equally unentitled to the honour they arrogate to themselves. If a multitude of blind men should set out for a certain city, and dispute about the right road till a battle ensued between them, the probable effect would be that none of them would ever reach it; and such a fray, preposterous and shocking in the extreme, would exhibit a picture in some degree resembling the original of which we have been speaking. And why is not the world thus occupied at present? even because they have exchanged a zeal, that was no better than madness, for an indifference equally pitiable and absurd. The holy sepulchre has lost its importance in the eyes of nations called Christians, not because the light of true wisdom has delivered them from a superstitious attachment to the spot, but because he that was buried in it is no longer regarded by them as the Saviour of the world. The exercise of reason, enlightened by philosophy, has cured them indeed of the misery of an abused understanding, but together with the delusion they have lost the substance, and for the sake of the lies that were grafted upon it have quarreled with the truth itself. Here then we see the *ne plus ultrà* of human wisdom, at last in affairs of religion. It enlightens the mind with respect to nonessentials but with respect to that in which the essence of Christianity consists, leaves it perfectly in the dark. It can discover many errors that in different ages have disgraced the faith; but it is only

to make way for the admission of one more fatal than them all, which represents that faith itself as a delusion. Why those evils have been permitted shall be known hereafter. One thing in the mean time is certain, that the folly and frenzy of the professed disciples of the Gospel have been more dangerous to its interests, than all the avowed hostilities of its adversaries; and perhaps for this cause these mischiefs might be suffered to prevail for a season, that its divine original and nature might be the more illustrated, when it should appear that it was able to stand its ground for ages against that most formidable of all attacks, the indiscretion of its friends. The outrages that have followed this perversion of the truth have proved indeed a stumbling-block to individuals; the wise of this world, with all their wisdom, have not been able to distinguish between the blessing and the abuse of it. Voltaire was offended, and Gibbon has turned his back; but the flock of Christ is still nourished, and still increases, notwithstanding the unbelief of a philosopher is able to convert bread into a stone, and a fish into a serpent.

I am much obliged to you for the voyages, which I received, and began to read last night. My imagination is so captivated upon these occasions, that I seem to partake with the navigators in all the dangers they encountered. I lose my anchor; my mainsail is rent into shreds; I kill a shark, and by signs converse with a Patagonian, and all this without moving from the fireside. The principal fruits of these circuits, that have been made around the globe, seem likely to be the amusement of those that staid at home. Discoveries have been made, but such discoveries as will hardly satisfy the expense of such undertakings. We brought away an Indian, and having debauched him, we sent him home again to communicate the infection to his country—fine sport, to be sure, but such as will not defray the cost. Nations that live upon bread-fruit, and have no mines to make them worthy of our acquaintance, will be but little visited for the future. So much the better for them! their poverty is indeed their mercy.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *October*, 1783.

I AM much obliged to you for your American anecdotes, and feel the obligation perhaps more sensibly, the labour of transcribing being in particular that to which I myself have the greatest aversion. The Loyalists are much to be pitied; driven from all the comforts that depend upon and are intimately connected with a residence in their native land, and sent to cultivate a distant one, without the means of doing it; abandoned, too, through a deplorable necessity, by the government to which they have sacrificed all; they exhibit a spectacle of distress, which one can not view even at this distance without participating in what they feel. Why could not some of our useless wastes and forests have been allotted to their support? To have built them houses indeed, and to have furnished them with implements of husbandry, would have put us to no small expense; but I suppose the increase of population, and the improvement of the soil, would soon have been felt as a national advantage, and have indemnified the state, if not enriched it. We are bountiful to foreigners, and neglect those of our own household. I remember that compassionating the miseries of the Portuguese, at the time of the Lisbon earthquake, we sent them a ship load of tools to clear away the rubbish with, and to assist them in rebuilding the city. I remember too, it was reported at the time, that the court of Portugal accepted our wheelbarrows and spades with a very ill grace, and treated our bounty with contempt. An act like this in behalf of our brethren, carried only a little further, might possibly have redeemed them from ruin, have resulted in emolument to ourselves, have been received with joy, and repaid with gratitude. Such are my speculations upon the subject, who not being a politician by profession, and very seldom giving my attention for a moment to such a matter, may not be aware of difficulties and objections, which they of the cabinet can discern with half an eye. Perhaps to have taken under our protection a race of men proscribed by the Congress might be thought dangerous to the interests we hope to have hereafter in their high and mighty regards and affections. It is ever the way of those who rule the earth, to leave out of their reckoning Him who rules the universe. They forget that the poor have a friend more powerful to avenge, than they can be to oppress, and that treachery and perfidy must therefore prove bad policy in the end. The Americans themselves appear to me to be in a situation little less pitiable than that of the deserted Loyalists. Their fears of arbitrary imposition were certainly well founded. A struggle therefore might be necessary, in order to prevent it, and this end might surely have been answered without a renunciation of dependence. But the passions of a whole people, once put in motion, are not soon quieted. Contest begets aversion, a little success inspires more ambitious hopes, and thus a slight quarrel terminates at last in a breach never to be healed, and perhaps in the ruin of both parties. It does not seem likely that a country so distinguished by the Creator with every thing that can make it desirable, should be

given up to desolation for ever; and they may possibly have reason on their side, who suppose that in time it will have the pre-eminence over all others; but the day of such prosperity seems far distant—Omnipotence indeed can hasten it, and it may dawn when it is least expected. But we govern ourselves in all our reasonings by present appearances. Persons at least no better informed than myself are constrained to do so.

I intended to have taken another subject when I began, and I wish I had. No man living is less qualified to settle nations than I am; but when I write to you, I talk, that is, I write as fast as my pen can run, and on this occasion it ran away with me. I acknowledge myself in your debt for your last favour, but can not pay you now, unless you will accept as payment, what I know you value more than all I can say beside, the most unfeigned assurances of my affection for you and yours.

Yours, &c. W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

Oct. 20, 1783.

I SHOULD not have been thus long silent, had I known with certainty where a letter of mine might find you. Your summer excursions however are now at an end, and addressing a line to you in the centre of the busy scene in which you spend your winter, I am pretty sure of my mark.

I see the winter approaching without much concern, though a passionate lover of fine weather and the pleasant scenes of summer; but the long evenings have their comforts too, and there is hardly to be found upon the earth, I suppose, so snug a creature as an Englishman by his fireside in the winter. I mean however an Englishman that lives in the country, for in London it is not very easy to avoid intrusion. I have two ladies to read to, sometimes more, but never less—at present we are circumnavigating the globe, and I find the old story with which I amused myself some years since, through the great felicity of a memory not very retentive, almost new. I am however sadly at a loss for Cook's voyage, can you send it? I shall be glad of Foster's too. These together will make the winter pass merrily, and you will much oblige me W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR WILLIAM, *Nov.* 10, 1783.

I HAVE lost and wasted almost all my writing time, in making an alteration in the verses I either enclose or subjoin, for I know not which will be the case at present.* If prose comes readily, I shall transcribe them on another sheet, otherwise, on this. You will understand, before you have read many of them, that they are not for the press. I lay you under no other injunctions. The unkind behaviour of our acquaintance, though it is possible that in some instances it may not much affect our happiness, nor engage many of our thoughts, will sometimes obtrude itself upon us with a degree of importunity not easily resisted; and then perhaps, though almost insensible of it before, we feel more than the occasion will justify. In such a moment it was that I conceived this poem, and gave loose to a degree of resentment, which perhaps I ought not to have indulged, but which in a cooler hour I can not altogether condemn. My former intimacy with the two characters was such, that I could not but feel myself provoked by the neglect with which they both treated me on a late occasion. So much by way of preface.

You ought not to have supposed that if you had visited us last summer, the pleasure of the interview would have been all your own. By such an imagination you wrong both yourself and us. Do you suppose we do not love you? You can not suspect your mother of coldness; and as to me, assure yourself I have no friend in the world with whom I communicate without the least reserve, yourself excepted. Take heart then, and when you find a favourable opportunity to come, assure yourself of such a welcome from us both as you have a right to look for. But I have observed in your two last letters somewhat of a dejection and melancholy, that I am afraid you do not sufficiently strive against. I suspect you of being too sedentary. "You can not walk." Why you can not is best known to yourself. I am sure your legs are long enough, and your person does not overload them. But I beseech you ride, and ride often. I think I have heard you say, you can not even do that without an object. Is not health an object? Is not a new prospect, which in most countries is gained at the end of every mile, an object? Assure yourself that easy chairs are no friends to cheerfulness, and that a long winter spent by the fireside is a prelude to an unhealthy spring. Every thing I see in the fields is to me an object, and I can look at the same rivulet, or at a handsome tree, every day of my life, with new pleasure. This indeed is partly the effect of a natural taste for rural beauty, and partly the effect of habit; for I never in all my life have let slip the opportunity of breathing fresh air, and of conversing with nature, when I could fairly catch it. I earnestly recommend a cultivation of the same taste to you, suspecting that you have neglected it, and suffer for doing so.

* Verses from a poem entitled Valediction. Vide Poems

Last Saturday se'nnight, the moment I had composed myself in my bed, your mother too having just got into hers, we were alarmed by a cry of fire on the staircase. I immediately arose, and saw sheets of flame above the roof of Mr. Palmer's house, our opposite neighbour. The mischief however was not so near to him as it seemed to be, having begun at a butcher's yard, at a little distance. We made all haste down stairs, and soon threw open the street door, for the reception of as much lumber, of all sorts, as our house would hold, brought into it by several who thought it necessary to move their furniture. In two hours' time we had so much that we could hold no more, even the uninhabited part of our building being filled. Not that we ourselves were entirely secure—an adjoining thatch, on which fell showers of sparks, being rather a dangerous neighbour. Providentially however the night was perfectly calm, and we escaped. By four in the morning it was extinguished, having consumed many out-buildings, but no dwelling-house. Your mother suffered a little in her health, from the fatigue and bustle of the night, but soon recovered. As for me, it hurt me not. The slightest wind would have carried the fire to the very extremity of the town, there being multitudes of thatched buildings and fagot-piles so near to each other, that they must have proved infallible conductors.

The balloons prosper; I congratulate you upon it. Thanks to Montgolfier, we shall fly at last.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR WILLIAM, *Nov.* 24, 1783.

An evening unexpectedly retired, and which your mother and I spend without company (an occurrence far from frequent,) affords me a favourable opportunity to write by to-morrow's post, which else I could not have found. You are very good to consider my literary necessities with so much attention, and I feel proportionably grateful. Blair's Lectures (though I suppose they must make a part of my private studies, not being *ad captum fœminarum*) will be perfectly welcome. You say you felt my verses; I assure you that in this you follow my example, for I felt them first. A man's lordship is nothing to me, any further than in connexion with qualities that entitle him to my respect. If he thinks himself privileged by it to treat me with neglect, I am his humble servant, and shall never be at a loss to render him an equivalent. I will not however belie my knowledge of mankind so much, as to seem surprised at a treatment which I had abundant reason to expect To these men with whom I was once intimate, and for many years, I am no longer necessary, no longer convenient, or in any respect an object. They think of me as of the man in the moon, and whether I have a lantern, or a dog and fagot, or whether I have neither of those desirable accommodations, is to them a matter of perfect indifference: upon that point we are agreed, our indifference is mutual, and were I to publish again, which is not impossible, I should give them a proof of it.

L'Estrange's Josephus has lately furnished us with evening lectures. But the historian is so tediously circumstantial, and the translator so insupportably coarse and vulgar, that we are all three weary of him. How would Tacitus have shone upon such a subject, great master as he was of the art of description, concise without obscurity, and affecting without being poetical. But so it was ordered, and for wise reasons, no doubt, that the greatest calamities any people ever suffered, and an accomplishment of one of the most signal prophecies in the Scripture, should be recorded by one of the worst writers. The man was a temporizer too, and courted the favour of his Roman masters at the expense of his own creed, or else an infidel and absolutely disbelieved it. You will think me very difficult to please; I quarrel with Josephus for the want of elegance, and with some of our modern historians for having too much. With him for running right forward like a gazette, without stopping to make a single observation by the way; and with them, for pretending to delineate characters that existed two thousand years ago, and to discover the motives by which they were influenced, with the same precision as if they had been their contemporaries.—Simplicity is become a very rare quality in a writer. In the decline of great kingdoms, and where refinement in all the arts is carried to an excess, I suppose it is always rare. The latter Roman writers are remarkable for false ornament, they were yet no doubt admired by the readers of their own day; and with respect to the authors of the present era, the most popular among them appear to me equally censurable on the same account. Swift and Addison were simple.

Your mother wants room for a postscript, so my lecture must conclude abruptly.

Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

It is hard upon us striplings who have uncles still living (N. B. I myself have an uncle still alive) that those venerable gentlemen should stand in our way, even when the ladies are in question; that I, for instance, should find in one page of your letter a hope that Miss Shuttleworth would

be of your party, and be told in the next that she is engaged to your uncle. Well we may perhaps never be uncles, but we may reasonably hope that the time is coming, when others as young as we are now, shall envy us the privileges of old age, and see us engross that share in the attention of the ladies to which their youth must aspire in vain. Make our compliments if you please to your sister Eliza, and tell her that we are both mortified at having missed the pleasure of seeing her.

Balloons are so much the mode, that even in this country we have attempted a balloon. You may possibly remember that at a place called Weston, a little more than a mile from Olney, there lives a family, whose name is Throckmorton. The present possessor of the estate is a young man whom I remember a boy. He has a wife, who is young, genteel, and handsome. They are Papists, but much more amiable than many Protestants. We never had any intercourse with the family, though ever since we lived here we have enjoyed the range of their pleasure grounds, having been favoured with a key, which admits us into all. When this man succeeded to the estate, on the death of his elder brother, and came to settle at Weston, I sent him a complimentary card, requesting the continuance of that privilege, having till then enjoyed it by favour of his mother, who on that occasion went to finish her days at Bath. You may conclude that he granted it, and for about two years nothing more passed between us. A fortnight ago, I received an invitation in the civilest terms, in which he told me that the next day he should attempt to fill a balloon, and if it would be any pleasure to me to be present, should be happy to see me. Your mother and I went. The whole country were there, but the balloon could not be filled. The endeavour was, I believe, very philosophically made, but such a process depends for its success upon such niceties as make it very precarious. Our reception was however flattering to a great degree, insomuch that more notice seemed to be taken of us, than we could possibly have expected, indeed rather more than of any of his other guests. They even seemed anxious to recommend themselves to our regards. We drank chocolate, and were asked to dine, but were engaged. A day or two afterwards, Mrs. Unwin and I walked that way, and were overtaken in a shower. I found a tree that I thought would shelter us both, a large elm, in a grove that fronts the mansion. Mrs. T. observed us, and running towards us in the rain insisted on our walking in. He was gone out. We sat chatting with her till the weather cleared up, and then at her instance took a walk with her in the garden. The garden is almost their only walk, and is certainly their only retreat in which they are not liable to interruption. She offered us a key of it in a manner that made it impossible not to accept it, and said she would send us one. A few days afterwards in the cool of the evening we walked that way again. We saw them going toward the house, and exchanged bows and curtsies at a distance, but did not join them. In a few minutes when we had passed the house, and had almost reached the gate that opens out of the park into the adjoining field, I heard the iron gate belonging to the court-yard ring, and saw Mr. T. advancing hastily towards us, we made equal haste to meet, he presented to us the key, which I told him I esteemed a singular favour, and after a few such speeches as are made on such occasions, we parted. This happened about a week ago. I concluded nothing less than that all this civility and attention was designed, on their part, as a prelude to a nearer acquaintance; but here at present the matter rests. I should like exceedingly to be on an easy footing there, to give a morning call now and then, and to receive one, but nothing more. For though he is one of the most agreeable men I ever saw, I could not wish to visit him in any other way; neither our house, furniture, servants, or income, being such as qualify us to make entertainments, neither would I on any account be introduced to the neighbouring gentry. Mr. T. is altogether a man of fashion, and respectable on every account.

I have told you a long story. Farewell. We number the days as they pass, and are glad that we shall see you and your sister soon.

Yours, &c. W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR WILLIAM, *Jan.* 3, 1784.

YOUR silence began to be distressing both to your mother and me, and had I not received a letter from you last night, I should have written by this post to inquire after your health. How can it be, that you, who are not stationary like me, but often change your situation, and mix with a variety of company, should suppose me furnished with such abundant materials, and yourself destitute? I assure you faithfully, that I do not find the soil of Olney prolific in the growth of such articles as make letter-writing a desirable employment. No place contributes less to the catalogue of incidents, or is more scantily supplied with anecdotes worth notice.

We have

> One parson, one poet, one bellman, one crier,
> And the poor poet is our only 'squire.

Guess then if I have not more reason to expect two letters from you, than you one from me. The principal occurrence, and that which affects me most at present, came to pass this moment. The

stair-foot door, being swelled by the thaw, would do any thing better than it would open. An attempt to force it upon that office has been attended with such a horrible dissolution of its parts, that we were immediately obliged to introduce a chirurgeon, commonly called a carpenter, whose applications we have some hope will cure it of a locked jaw, and heal its numerous fractures. His medicines are powerful chalybeates, and a certain glutinous salve, which he tells me is made of the tails and ears of animals. The consequences however are rather unfavourable to my present employment, which does not well brook noise, bustle, and interruption.

This being the case, I shall not perhaps be either so perspicuous, or so diffuse, on the subject of which you desire my sentiments, as I should be, but I will do my best. Know then that I have learnt long since of Abbé Raynal, to hate all monopolies, as injurious, howsoever managed, to the interests of commerce at large; consequently the charter in question would not at any rate be a favourite of mine. This however is of itself I confess no sufficient reason to justify the resumption of it. But such reasons I think are not wanting. A grant of that kind, it is well known, is always forfeited by the nonperformance of the conditions. And why not equally forfeited, if those conditions are exceeded, if the design of it be perverted, and its operation extended to objects which were never in the contemplation of the donor? This appears to me to be no misrepresentation of their case, whose charter is supposed to be in danger. It constitutes them a trading company, and gives them an exclusive right to traffic in the East Indies. But it does no more. It invests them with no sovereignty; it does not convey them the royal prerogative of making war and peace, which the king can not alienate if he would. But this prerogative they have exercised, and, forgetting the terms of their institution, have possessed themselves of an immense territory, which they have ruled with a rod of iron, to which it is impossible they should even have a right, unless such a one as it is a disgrace to plead—the right of conquest. The potentates of this country they dash in pieces like a potter's vessel, as often as they please, making the happiness of thirty millions of mankind a consideration subordinate to that of their own emolument, oppressing them as often as it may serve a lucrative purpose, and in no instance, that I have ever heard, consulting their interest or advantage. That government therefore is bound to interfere, and to unking these tyrants, is to me self-evident. And if having subjugated so much of this miserable world, it is therefore necessary that we must keep possession of it, it appears to me a duty so binding on the legislature to resume it from the hands of those usurpers, that I should think a curse, and a bitter one, must follow the neglect of it. But suppose this were done, can they be legally deprived of their charter? In truth I think so. If the abuse and perversion of a charter can amount to a defeasance of it, never were they so grossly palpable as in this instance; never was charter so justly forfeited. Neither am I at all afraid that such a measure should be drawn into a precedent, unless it could be alleged as a sufficient reason for not hanging a rogue, that perhaps magistracy might grow wanton in the exercise of such a power, and now and then hang up an honest man for its amusement. When the governors of the bank shall have deserved the same severity, I hope they will meet with it. In the mean time I do not think them a whit more in jeopardy because a corporation of plunderers have been brought to justice.

We are well, and love you all. I never wrote in such a hurry, nor in such disturbance. Pardon the effects, and believe me yours affectionately,

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Jan.* 18, 1784.

I too have taken leave of the old year, and parted with it just when you did, but with very different sentiments and feelings upon the occasion. I looked back upon all the passages and occurrences upon it, as a traveller looks back upon a wilderness, through which he has passed with weariness and sorrow of heart, reaping no other fruit of his labour than the poor consolation that, dreary as the desert was, he has left it all behind him. The traveller would find even this comfort considerably lessened, if, as soon as he had passed one wilderness, another of equal length, and equally desolate, should expect him. In this particular, his experience and mine would exactly tally. I should rejoice indeed that the old year is over and gone, if I had not every reason to prophesy a new one similar to it.

I am glad you have found so much hidden treasure; and Mrs. Unwin desires me to tell you that you did her no more than justice, in believing that she would rejoice in it. It is not easy to surmise the reason, why the reverend doctor, your predecessor, concealed it. Being a subject of a free government, and I suppose full of the divinity most in fashion, he could not fear lest his great riches should expose him to persecution. Nor can I suppose that he held it any disgrace for a dignitary of the church to be wealthy, at a time when churchmen in general spare no pains to become so. But the wisdom of some men has a droll sort of knavishness in it, much like that of the magpie,

who hides what he finds with a deal of contrivance, merely for the pleasure of doing it.

Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR WILLIAM, *Jan.* 23, 1784.

When I first resolved to write an answer to your last, this evening, I had no thought of any thing more sublime than prose. But before I began, it occurred to me that perhaps you would not be displeased with an attempt to give a poetical translation of the lines you sent me. They are so beautiful, that I felt the temptation irresistible. At least, as the French say, it was *plus forte que moi;* and I accordingly complied. By this means I have lost an hour; and whether I shall be able to fill my sheets before supper, is as yet doubtful. But I will do my best.

For your remarks, I think them perfectly just. You have no reason to distrust your taste, or to submit the trial of it to me. You understand the use and the force of language as well as any man. You have quick feelings, and you are fond of poetry. How is it possible then that you should not be a judge of it? I venture to hazard only one alteration, which, as it appears to me, would amount to a little improvement. The seventh and eighth lines I think I should like better thus—

> Aspirante levi zephyro et redeunte serenâ
> Anni temperie, fœcundo e cespite surgunt.

My reason is, that the word *cum* is repeated too soon. At least my ear does not like it; and when it can be done without injury to the sense, there seems to be an elegance in diversifying the expression, as much as possible, upon similar occasions. It discovers a command of phrase, and gives a more masterly air to the piece. If *extincta* stood unconnected with *telis*, I should prefer your word *micant* to the doctor's *vigent*. But the latter seems to stand more in direct opposition to that of extinction, which is effected by a shaft or arrow. In the day-time the stars may be said to die, and in the night to recover their strength. Perhaps the doctor had in his eye that noble line of Gray—*Hyperion's march they spy, and glitt'ring shafts of war!* But it is a beautiful composition. It is tender, touching and elegant. It is not easy to do justice in English, as for example.*

Many thanks for the books, which, being most admirably packed, came safe. They will furnish us with many a winter evening's amusement. We are glad that you intend to be the carrier back.

We rejoice too that your cousin has remembered you in her will. The money she left to those who attended her hearse would have been better bestowed upon you; and by this time perhaps she thinks so. Alas! what an inquiry does that thought suggest, and how impossible to make it to any purpose? What are the employments of the departed spirit? and where does it subsist? Has it any cognizance of earthly things? Is it transported to an immeasurable distance; or is it still, though imperceptible to us, conversant with the same scene, and interested in what passes here? How little we know of a state to which we are all destined; and how does the obscurity, that hangs over that undiscovered country, increase the anxiety we sometimes feel as we are journeying towards it! It is sufficient however for such as you, and a few more of my acquaintance, to know that in your separate state you will be happy. Provision is made for your reception, and you will have no cause to regret aught that you have left behind.

I have written to Mr. ———. My letter went this morning. How I love and honour that man! For many reasons I dare not tell him how much. But I hate the frigidity of the style, in which I am forced to address him. That line of Horace—'*Dii tibi divitias dederunt artemque fruendi*"—was never so applicable to the poet's friend, as to Mr. ———. My bosom burns to immortalize him. But prudence says "Forbear!" and, though a poet, I pay respect to her injunctions.

I sincerely give you joy of the good you have unconsciously done by your example and conversation. That you seem to yourself not to deserve the acknowledgment your friend makes of it, is a proof that you do. Grace is blind to its own beauty, whereas such virtues as men may reach without it, are remarkable self-admirers. May you make such impressions upon many of your order! I know none that need them more.

You do not want our praises of your conduct towards Mr. ———. It is well for him however, and still better for yourself, that you are capable of such a part. It was said of some good man, (my memory does not serve me with his name,) "do him an ill turn and you make him your friend for ever." But it is Christianity only that forms such friends. I wish his father may be duly affected by this instance and proof of your superiority to those ideas of you which he has so unreasonably harboured. He is not in my favour now, nor will be upon any other terms.

I laughed at the comments you make on your own feelings, when the subject of them was a newspaper eulogium. But it was a laugh of pleasure and approbation: such indeed is the heart, and so is it made up. There are few that can do good, and keep their own secret, none perhaps without a struggle. Yourself, and your friend ———, are no very common instances of the fortitude that is necessary in such a conflict. In fo-

* See the note subjoined to the next letter.

mer days I have felt my heart beat, and every vein throb, upon such an occasion. To publish my own deed was wrong. I knew it to be so. But to conceal it seemed like a voluntary injury to myself. Sometimes I could, and sometimes I could not succeed. My occasions for such conflicts indeed were not very numerous.

Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Jan.* 25, 1784.

This contention about East Indian patronage seems not unlikely to avenge upon us, by its consequences, the mischiefs we have done there. The matter in dispute is too precious to be relinquished by either party; and each is jealous of the influence the other would derive from the possession of it. In a country whose politics have so long rolled upon the wheels of corruption, an affair of such value must prove a weight in either scale absolutely destructive of the very idea of a balance. Every man has his sentiments upon this subject, and I have mine. Were I constituted umpire of this strife, with full powers to decide it, I would tie a talent of lead about the neck of this patronage, and plunge it into the depths of the sea. To speak less figuratively, I would abandon all territorial interest in a country to which we can have no right, and which we can not govern with any security to the happiness of the inhabitants, or without the danger of incurring either perpetual broils, or the most insupportable tyranny at home. That sort of tyranny, I mean, which flatters and tantalizes the subject with a show of freedom, and in reality, allows him nothing more; bribing to the right and left, rich enough to afford the purchase of a thousand consciences, and consequently strong enough, if it happen to meet with an incorruptible one, to render all the efforts of that man, or of twenty such men, if they could be found, romantic, and of no effect. I am the king's most loyal subject, and most obedient humble servant. But by his majesty's leave I must acknowledge I am not altogether convinced of the rectitude even of his own measures, or the simplicity of his views; and if I were satisfied that he himself is to be trusted, it is nevertheless palpable, that he can not answer for his successors. At the same time he is my king, and I reverence him as such. I account his prerogative sacred, and shall never wish prosperity to a party that invades it, and that under the pretence of patriotism would annihilate all the consequence of a character essential to the very being of the constitution. For these reasons I am sorry that we have any dominion in the East—that we have any such emoluments to contend about. Their immense value will probably prolong the dispute, and such struggles having been already made in the conduct of it, as have shaken our very foundations, it seems not unreasonable to suppose that still greater efforts, and more fatal, are behind; and after all, the decision in favour of either side may be ruinous to the whole. In the mean time, that the company themselves are but indifferently qualified for the kingship, is most deplorably evident. What shall I say therefore? I distrust the court, I suspect the patriots, I put the company entirely aside, as having forfeited all claim to confidence in such a business, and see no remedy of course, but in the annihilation, if that could be accomplished, of the very existence of our authority in the East Indies.

The late Doctor Jortin
Had the good fortune
To write these verses
Upon tombs and hearses:
Which I being jinglish,
Have done into English.*

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *February*, 1784.

I am glad that you have finished a work, of which I well remember the beginning, and which I was sorry you thought it expedient to discontinue. Your reason for not proceeding was however such as I was obliged to acquiesce in, being suggested by a jealousy you felt, "lest your spirit should be betrayed into acrimony, in writing upon such a subject." I doubt not you have sufficiently guarded that point, and indeed at the time, I could not discover that you had failed in it. I have busied myself this morning in contriving a Greek title, and in seeking a motto. The motto you mention is certainly apposite. But I think it an objection that it has been so much in use; almost every writer that has claimed a liberty to think for himself upon whatever subject, having chosen it. I therefore send you one, which I never saw in that shape yet, and which appears to me equally apt and proper. The Greek word, δεσμος, which signifies literally a shackle, may figuratively serve to express those chains which bigotry and prejudice cast upon the mind. It seems, therefore, to speak like a lawyer, no misnomer of your book to call it,

Μισοδεσμος.

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* For the verses entitled "In brevitatem vitæ spatii hominibus concessi," together with Cowper's translation of them, vide Poems.

The following pleases me most of all the mottos I have thought of. But with respect both to that and the title you will use your pleasure.

Querelis
Haud justis assurgis, et irrita jurgia jactas.
Æn. X. 94.

From the little I have seen, and the much I have heard of the manager of the Review you mention, I can not feel even the smallest push of a desire to serve him in the capacity of poet. Indeed I dislike him so much, that, had I a drawer full of pieces fit for his purpose, I hardly think I should contribute to his collection. It is possible too that I may live to be once more a publisher myself; in which case I should be glad to find myself in possession of any such original pieces, as might decently make their appearance in a volume of my own. At present however I have nothing that would be of use to him, nor have I many opportunities of composing. Sunday being the only day in the week which we spend alone.

I am at this moment pinched for time, but was desirous of proving to you, with what alacrity my Greek and Latin memory are always ready to obey you, and therefore by the first post have to the best of my ability complied with your request.

Believe me, my dear friend,
Affectionately yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Feb.* 10, 1784.

THE morning is my writing time, and in the morning I have no spirits. So much the worse for my correspondents. Sleep, that refreshes my body, seems to cripple me in every other respect. As the evening approaches, I grow more alert, and when I am retiring to bed, am more fit for mental occupation than at any other time. So it fares with us whom they call nervous. By a strange inversion of the animal economy, we are ready to sleep when we have most need to be awake, and go to bed just when we might sit up to some purpose. The watch is irregularly wound up, it goes in the night when it is not wanted, and in the day stands still. In many respects we have the advantage of our forefathers the Picts. We sleep in a whole skin, and are not obliged to submit to the painful operation of puncturing ourselves from head to foot, in order that we may be decently dressed, and fit to appear abroad. But on the other hand, we have reason enough to envy them their tone of nerves, and that flow of spirits which effectually secured them from all uncomfortable impressions of a gloomy atmosphere, and from every shade of melancholy from every other cause. They understood, I suppose, the use of vulnerary herbs, having frequent occasion for some skill in surgery; but physicians, I presume, they had none, having no need of any. Is it possible, that a creature like myself can be descended from such progenitors, in whom there appears not a single trace of family resemblance? What an alteration have a few ages made? They, without clothing, would defy the severest season; and I, with all the accommodations that art has since invented, am hardly secure even in the mildest. If the wind blows upon me when my pores are open, I catch cold. A cough is the consequence. I suppose if such a disorder could have seized a Pict, his friends would have concluded that a bone had stuck in his throat, and that he was in some danger of choking. They would perhaps have addressed themselves to the cure of his cough by thrusting their fingers into his gullet, which would only have exasperated the case. But they would never have thought of administering laudanum, my only remedy. For this difference, however, that has obtained between me and my ancestors, I am indebted to the luxurious practices, and enfeebling self-indulgence, of a long line of grandsires, who from generation to generation have been employed in deteriorating the breed, till at last the collected effects of all their follies have centred in my puny self. A man indeed, but not in the image of those that went before me. A man, who sigh and groan, who wear out life in dejection and oppression of spirits, and who never think of the Aborigines of the country to which I belong, without wishing that I had been born among them. The evil is without a remedy, unless the ages that are passed could be recalled, my whole pedigree be permitted to live again, and being properly admonished to beware of enervating sloth and refinement, would preserve their hardiness of nature unimpaired, and transmit the desirable quality to their posterity. I once saw Adam in a dream. We sometimes say of a picture, that we doubt not its likeness to the original, though we never saw him; a judgment we have some reason to form, when the face is strongly characterized, and the features full of expression. So I think of my visionary Adam, and for a similar reason. His figure was awkward indeed in the extreme. It was evident that he had never been taught by a Frenchman to hold his head erect, or to turn out his toes; to dispose gracefully of his arms, or to simper without a meaning. But if Mr. Bacon was called upon to produce a statue of Hercules, he need not wish for a juster pattern. He stood like a rock; the size of his limbs, the prominence of his muscles, and the height of his stature, all conspired to bespeak him a creature whose strength had suffered no diminution; and who, being the first of his race, did not come into the world under a necessity of sustaining a load of infirmities, derived to him from the intemperance of others,

He was as much stouter than a Pict, as I suppose a Pict to have been than I. Upon my hypothesis, therefore, there has been a gradual declension, in point of bodily vigour, from Adam down to me: at least if my dream were a just representation of that gentleman, and deserve the credit I can not help giving it, such must have been the case.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

[TO THE REV. WILLIAM BULL.]

February 22, 1784.

"I congratulate you on the thaw—I suppose it is an universal blessing, and probably felt all over Europe. I myself am the better for it, who wanted nothing that might make the frost supportable; what reason therefore have they to rejoice, who, being in want of all things, were exposed to its utmost rigour?—The ice in my ink, however, is not yet dissolved. It was long before the frost seized it, but at last it prevailed. The Sofa has consequently received little or no addition since. It consists at present of four books and part of a fifth; when the sixth is finished, the work is accomplished; but if I may judge by my present inability, that period is at a considerable distance."

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

My dear friend, *February*, 1784.

I give you joy of a thaw, that has put an end to a frost of nine weeks' continuance with very little interruption; the longest that has happened since the year 1739. May I presume that you feel yourself indebted to me for intelligence, which perhaps no other of your correspondents will vouchsafe to communicate, though they are as well apprised of it, and as much convinced of the truth of it, as myself? It is, I suppose, every where felt as a blessing, but nowhere more sensibly than at Olney; though even at Olney the severity of it has been alleviated in behalf of many. The same benefactor, who befriended them last year, has with equal liberality administered a supply to their necessities in the present. Like the subterraneous flue that warms my myrtles, he does good, and is unseen. His injunctions of secrecy are as rigorous as ever, and must, therefore, be observed with the same attention. He, however, is a happy man, whose philanthropy is not like mine, an impotent principle, spending itself in fruitless wishes. At the same time, I confess it is a consolation, and I feel it an honour, to be employed as the conductor, and to be trusted as the dispenser, of another man's bounty. Some have been saved from perishing, and all, that could partake of it, from the most pitiable distress.

I will not apologize for my politics, or suspect them of error, merely because they are taken up from the newspapers. I take it for granted, that those reporters of the wisdom of our representatives are tolerably correct and faithful. Were they not, and were they guilty of frequent and gross misrepresentation, assuredly they would be chastised by the rod of parliamentary criticism. Could I be present at the debates, I should indeed have a better opinion of my documents. But if the House of Commons be the best school of British politics, which I think an undeniable assertion, then he that reads what passes there has opportunities of information, inferior only to theirs who hear for themselves, and can be present upon the spot. Thus qualified I take courage; and when a certain reverend neighbour of ours curls his nose at me, and holds my opinions cheap, merely because he has passed through London, I am not altogether convinced that he has reason on his side. I do not know that the air of the metropolis has a power to brighten the intellects, or that to sleep a night in the great city is a necessary cause of wisdom. He tells me that Mr. Fox is a rascal, and that Lord North is a villain, that every creature execrates them both, and that I ought to do so too. But I beg to be excused. Villain and rascal are appellations, which we, who do not converse with great men, are rather sparing in the use of. I can conceive them both to be most entirely persuaded of the rectitude of their conduct; and the rather, because I feel myself much inclined to believe that, being so, they are not mistaken. I can not think that secret influence is a bugbear, a phantom conjured up to serve a purpose; the mere *shibboleth* of a party: and being, and having always been, somewhat of an enthusiast on the subject of British liberty, I am not able to withhold my reverence and good wishes from the man, whoever he be, that exerts himself in a constitutional way to oppose it.

Caraccioli upon the subject of self-acquaintance was never, I believe, translated. I have sometimes thought that the Theological Miscellany might be glad of a chapter of it monthly. It is a work which I much admire. You, who are master of their plan, can tell me whether such a contribution would be welcome. If you think it would, I would be punctual in my remittances; and a labour of that sort would suit me better in my present state of mind than original composition on religious subjects.

Remember us as those that love you, and are never unmindful of you.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

My dear friend, *Feb.* 29, 1784.

We are glad that you have such a Lord Petre in your neighbourhood. He must be a man of a

liberal turn, to employ a heretic in such a service. I wish you a further acquaintance with him, not doubting that the more he knows you he will find you the more agreeable. You despair of becoming a prebendary for want of certain rhythmical talents, which you suppose me possessed of. But what think you of a cardinal's hat? Perhaps his lordship may have interest at Rome, and that greater honour may await you. Seriously, however, I respect his character, and should not be sorry if there were many such Papists in the land.

Mr. ——— has given free scope to his generosity, and contributed as largely to the relief of Olney, as he did last year. Soon after I had given you notice of his first remittance, we received a second to the same amount, accompanied indeed with an intimation that we were to consider it as an anticipated supply, which, but for the uncommon severity of the present winter, he should have reserved for the next. The inference is, that next winter we are to expect nothing. But the man and his beneficent turn of mind considered, there is some reason to hope that, logical as the inference seems, it may yet be disappointed.

Adverting to your letter again, I perceive that you wish for my opinion of your answer to his lordship. Had I forgot to tell you that I approve of it, I know you well enough to be aware of the interpretation you would have put upon my silence. I am glad, therefore, that I happened to cast my eye upon your appeal to my opinion, before it was too late. A modest man, however able, has always some reason to distrust himself upon extraordinary occasions. Nothing so apt to betray us into absurdity, as too great a dread of it; and the application of more strength than enough is sometimes as fatal as too little; but you have escaped very well. For my own part, when I write to a stranger, I feel myself deprived of half my intellects. I suspect that I shall write nonsense, and I do so. I tremble at the thought of an inaccuracy, and become absolutely ungrammatical. I feel myself sweat. I have recourse to the knife and the pounce. I correct half a dozen blunders, which in a common case I should not have committed, and have no sooner despatched what I have written, than I recollect how much better I could have made it; how easily and genteelly I could have relaxed the stiffness of the phrase, and have cured the insufferable awkwardness of the whole, had they struck me a little earlier. Thus we stand in awe of we know not what, and miscarry through mere desire to excel.

I read Johnson's Prefaces every night, except when the newspaper calls me off. At a time like the present, what author can stand in competition with a newspaper? or who, that has a spark of patriotism, does not point all his attention to the present crisis? W. C.

I am so disgusted with ———, for allowing himself to be silent, when so loudly called upon to write to you, that I do not choose to express my feelings. Wo to the man whom kindness can not soften!

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *March* 8, 1784.

I THANK you for the two first numbers of the Theological Miscellany. I have not read them regularly through, but sufficiently to observe that they are much indebted to Omicron. An essay, signed Parvulus, pleased me likewise; and I shall be glad if a neighbour of ours, to whom I have lent them, should be able to apply to his own use the lesson it inculcates. On further consideration, I have seen reason to forego my purpose of translating Caraccioli. Though I think no book more calculated to teach the art of pious meditation, or to enforce a conviction of the vanity of all pursuits, that have not the soul's interests for their object, I can yet see a flaw in his manner of instructing, that in a country so enlightened as ours would escape nobody's notice. Not enjoying the advantages of evangelical ordinances, and Christian communion, he falls into a mistake natural in his situation; ascribing always the pleasures he found in a holy life to his own industrious perseverance in a contemplative course, and not to the immediate agency of the great Comforter of his people; and directing the eye of his readers to a spiritual principle within, which he supposes to subsist in the soul of every man, as the source of all divine enjoyment, and to Christ, as he would gladly have done, had he fallen under Christian teachers. Allowing for these defects, he is a charming writer, and by those who know how to make such allowances, may be read with great delight and improvement. But with these defects in his manner, though (I believe) no man ever had a heart more devoted to God, he does not seem dressed with sufficient exactness to be fit for the public eye, where man is known to be nothing, and Jesus all in all. He must, therefore, be dismissed as an unsuccessful candidate for a place in this Miscellany, and will be less mortified at being rejected in the first instance, than if he had met with a refusal from the publisher. I can only therefore repeat what I said before, that when I find a proper subject, and myself at liberty to pursue it, I will endeavour to contribute my quota. W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Olney, March 11, 1784.

I RETURN you many thanks for your apology,

which I have read with great pleasure.* You know of old that your style always pleases me: and having in a former letter given you the reasons for which I like it, I spare you now the pain of a repetition. The spirit too, in which you write, pleases me as much, But I perceive that in some cases it is possible to be severe, and at the same time perfectly good-tempered; in all cases I suppose where we suffer by an injurious and unreasonable attack, and can justify our conduct by a plain and simple narrative. On such occasions, truth itself seems a satire, because by implication at least it convicts our adversaries of the want of charity and candour. For this reason perhaps you will find that you have made many angry, though you are not so; and it is possible that they may be the more angry upon that very account. To assert, and to prove, that an enlightened minister of the gospel may, without any violation of his conscience and even upon the ground of prudence and propriety, continue in the establishment; and to do this with the most absolute composure, must be very provoking to the dignity of some dissenting doctors; and to nettle them still the more, you in a manner impose upon them the necessity of being silent, by declaring that you will be so yourself. Upon the whole however I have no doubt that your apology will do good. If it should irritate some, who have more zeal than knowledge, and more of bigotry than of either, it may serve to enlarge the views of others, and to convince them, that there may be grace, truth, and efficacy, in the ministry of a church of which they are not members. I wish it success, and all that attention to which, both from the nature of the subject, and the manner in which you have treated it, it is so well entitled.

The patronage of the East Indies will be a dangerous weapon in whatever hands. I have no prospect of deliverance for this country, but the same that I have of a possibility that we may one day be disencumbered of our ruinous possessions in the East.

Our good neighbours, who have so successfully knocked away our Western crutch from under us seem to design us the same favour on the opposite side; in which case we shall be poor, but I think we shall stand a better chance to be free; and I had rather drink water-gruel for breakfast, and be no man's slave, than wear a chain, and drink tea as usual.

I have just room to add, that we love you as usual, and are your very affectionate William and Mary. W. C.

* The book alluded to is entitled "Apologia. Four Letters to a Minister of an Independent Church. By a Minister of the Church of England."

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *March* 19, 1784.

I WISH it were in my power to give you any account of the Marquis Caraccioli. Some years since I saw a short history of him in the Review, of which I recollect no particulars, except that he was (and for aught I know may be still) an officer in the Prussian service. I have two volumes of his works, lent me by Lady Austen. One is upon the subject of self-acquaintance, and the other treats of the art of conversing with the same gentleman; had I pursued my purpose of translating him, my design was to have furnished myself, if possible, with some authentic account of him, which I suppose may be procured at any bookseller's who deals in foreign publications. But for the reasons given in my last I have laid aside the design. There is something in his style that touches me exceedingly, and which I do not know how to describe. I should call it pathetic, if it were occasional only, and never occurred but when his subject happened to be particularly affecting. But it is universal; he has not a sentence that is not marked with it. Perhaps therefore I may describe it better by saying, that his whole work has an air of pious and tender melancholy, which to me at least is extremely agreeable. This property of it, which depends perhaps altogether upon the arrangement of his words, and the modulation of his sentences, it would be very difficult to preserve in a translation. I do not know that our language is capable of being so managed, and rather suspect that it is not, and that it is peculiar to the French, because it is not unfrequent among their writers, and I never saw any thing similar to it in our own.

My evenings are devoted to books. I read aloud for the entertainment of the party, thus making amends by a vociferation of two hours for my silence at other times. We are in good health, and waiting as patiently as we can for the end of this second winter.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *March* 29, 1784.

IT being his majesty's pleasure that I should yet have another opportunity to write before he dissolves the parliament, I avail myself of it with all possible alacrity. I thank you for your last, which was the less welcome for coming, like an extraordinary gazette, at a time when it was not expected.

As when the sea is uncommonly agitated, the water finds it way into creeks and holes of rocks,

which in its calmer state it never reaches, in like manner the effect of these turbulent times is felt even at Orchardside, where in general we live as undisturbed by the political element, as shrimps or cockles that have been accidentally deposited in some hollow beyond the water mark, by the usual dashing of the waves. We were sitting yesterday after dinner, the two ladies and myself, very composedly, and without the least apprehension of any such intrusion in our snug parlour, one lady knitting, the other netting, and the gentleman winding worsted, when to our unspeakable surprise a mob appeared before the window; a smart rap was heard at the door, the boys halloo'd and the maid announced Mr G——. Puss* was unfortunately let out of her box, so that the candidate, with all his good friends at his heels, was refused admittance at the grand entry, and referred to the back door, as the only possible way of approach.

Candidates are creatures not very susceptible of affronts, and would rather I suppose climb in at a window, than be absolutely excluded. In a minute, the yard, the kitchen, and the parlour were filled. Mr. G—— advancing toward me shook me by the hand with a degree of cordiality that was extremely seducing. As soon as he and as many as could find chairs were seated, he began to open the intent of his visit. I told him I had no vote, for which he readily gave me credit. I assured him I had no influence, which he was not equally inclined to believe, and the less, no doubt, because Mr. A——, addressing himself to me at that moment, informed me that I had a great deal. Supposing that I could not be possessed of such a treasure without knowing it, I ventured to confirm my first assertion, by saying that if I had any I was utterly at a loss to imagine where it could be, or wherein it consisted. Thus ended the conference. Mr. —— squeezed me by the hand again, kissed the ladies, and withdrew. He kissed likewise the maid in the kitchen, and seemed, upon the whole, a most loving, kissing, kind-hearted gentleman. He is very young, genteel, and handsome. He has a pair of very good eyes in his head, which not being sufficient as it should seem for the many nice and difficult purposes of a senator, he has a third also, which he wore suspended by a ribband from his buttonhole. The boys halloo'd, the dogs barked, Puss scampered, the hero, with his long train of obsequious followers, withdrew. We made ourselves very merry with the adventure, and in a short time settled into our former tranquillity, never probably to be thus interrupted more. I thought myself however happy in being able to affirm truly that I had not that influence for which he sued; and for which, had I been possessed of it, with my present views of the dispute between the Crown and the Commons, I must have refused him, for he is on the side of the former. It is comfortable to be of no consequence in a world where one can not exercise any without disobliging somebody. The town however seems to be much at his service, and if he be equally successful throughout the county, he will undoubtedly gain his election. Mr. A—— perhaps was a little mortified, because it was evident that I owed the honour of this visit to his misrepresentation of my importance. But had he thought proper to assure Mr. G. that I had three heads, I should not I suppose have been bound to produce them.

Mr. S——, who you say was so much admired in your pulpit, would be equally admired in his own, at least by all capable judges, were he not so apt to be angry with his congregation. This hurts him, and had he the understanding and eloquence of Paul himself, would still hurt him. He seldom, hardly ever indeed, preaches a gentle, well-tempered sermon, but I hear it highly commended; but warmth of temper, indulged to a degree that may be called scolding, defeats the end of preaching. It is a misapplication of his powers, which it also cripples, and teases away his hearers. But he is a good man, and may perhaps outgrow it.

Yours, W. C.

* His tame hare.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

April, 1783.

People that are but little acquainted with the terrors of divine wrath, are not much afraid of trifling with their Maker. But for my own part I would sooner take Empedocle's leap, and fling myself into Mount Ætna, than I would do it in the slightest instance, were I in circumstances to make an election. In the Scripture we find a broad and clear exhibition of mercy, it is displayed in every page. Wrath is in comparison but slightly touched upon, because it is not so much a discovery of wrath as of forgiveness. But had the displeasure of God been the principal subject of the book, and had it circumstantially set forth that measure of it only which may be endured even in this life, the Christian world perhaps would have been less comfortable; but I believe presumptuous meddlers with the Gospel would have been less frequently met with.—The word is a flaming sword; and he that touches it with unhallowed fingers, thinking to make a tool of it, will find that he has burnt them.

What havoc in Calabria! every house is built upon the sand, whose inhabitants have no God

or only a false one. Solid and fluid are such in respect to each other: but with reference to the divine power they are equally fixed, or equally unstable. The inhabitants of a rock shall sink, while a cockboat shall save a man alive in the midst of the fathomless ocean. The Pope grants dispensations for folly and madness during the carnival. But it seems they are as offensive to him, whose vicegerent he pretends himself, at that season as at any other. Were I a Calabrian, I would not give my papa at Rome one farthing for his amplest indulgence, for this time forth for ever. There is a word that makes this world tremble; and the Pope can not countermand it. A fig for such a conjuror! Pharaoh's conjuror had twice his ability.

Believe me, my dear friend,
Affectionately yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR WILLIAM, *April* 5, 1784.

I THANKED you in my last for Johnson; I now thank you, with more emphasis, for Beattie, the most agreeable and amiable writer I ever met with; the only author I have seen whose critical and philosophical researches are diversified and embellished by a poetical imagination, that makes even the driest subject, and the leanest, a feast for an epicure in books. He is so much at his ease too, that his own character appears in every page, and which is very rare, we see not only the writer, but the man: and that man so gentle, so well-tempered, so happy in his religion, and so humane in his philosophy, that it is necessary to love him, if one has any sense of what is lovely. If you have not his poem called the Minstrel, and can not borrow it, I must beg you to buy it for me; for though I can not afford to deal largely in so expensive a commodity as books, I must afford to purchase at least the poetical works of Beattie. I have read six of Blair's Lectures, and what do I say of Blair? That he is a sensible man, master of his subject, and excepting here and there a Scotticism, a good writer, so far at least as perspicuity of expression, and method, contribute to make one. But oh the sterility of that man's fancy! if indeed he has any such faculty belonging to him. Perhaps philosophers, or men designed for such, are sometimes born without one; or perhaps it withers for want of exercise. However that may be, Dr. Blair has such a brain as Shakspeare somewhere describes—"dry as the remainder biscuit after a voyage."

I take it for granted that these good men are philosophically correct (for they are both agreed upon the subject) in their account of the origin of language; and if the Scripture had left us in the dark upon that article, I should very readily adopt their hypothesis for want of better information. I should suppose, for instance, that man made his first effort in speech in the way of an interjection, and that ah, or oh, being uttered with wonderful gesticulation, and variety of attitude, must have left his powers of expression quite exhausted: that in a course of time he would invent names for many things, but first for the objects of his daily wants. An apple would consequently be called an apple, and perhaps not many years would elapse before the appellation would receive the sanction of general use. In this case, and upon this supposition, seeing one in the hand of another man, he would exclaim with a most moving pathos, "Oh apple!"—well and good—oh apple! is a very affecting speech, but in the mean time it profits him nothing. The man that holds it, eats it, and *he* goes away with oh apple in his mouth, and with nothing better. Reflecting on his disappointment, and that perhaps it arose from his not being more explicit, he contrives a term to denote his idea of transfer or gratuitous communication, and the next occasion that offers of a similar kind, performs his part accordingly. His speech now stands thus, "Oh give apple!" The apple-holder perceives himself called upon to part with his fruit, and, having satisfied his own hunger, is perhaps not unwilling to do so. But unfortunately there is still room for a mistake, and, a third person being present, he gives the apple to him. Again disappointed, and again perceiving that his language has not all the precision that is requisite, the orator retires to his study, and there, after much deep thinking, conceives that the insertion of a pronoun, whose office shall be to signify that he not only wants the apple to be given, but given to himself, will remedy all defects, he uses it the next opportunity, and succeeds to a wonder, obtains the apple, and by his success such credit to his invention, that pronouns continue to be in great repute ever after.

Now as my two syllablemongers, Beattie and Blair, both agree that language was originally inspired, and that the great variety of languages we find upon earth at present took its rise from the confusion of tongues at Babel, I am not perfectly convinced that there is any just occasion to invent this very ingenious solution of a difficulty, which Scripture has solved already. My opinion however is, if I may presume to have an opinion of my own so different from theirs who are so much wiser than myself, that if man had been his own teacher, and had acquired his words and his phrases only as necessity or convenience had prompted, his progress must have been considerably slower than it was, and in Homer's days the production of such a poem as the Iliad impossible. On the contrary, I doubt not Adam on the very

day of his creation was able to express himself in terms both forcible and elegant, and that he was at no loss for sublime diction, and logical combination, when he wanted to praise his Maker.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR WILLIAM, *April* 25, 1784.

I WISH I had both burning words, and bright thoughts. But I have at present neither. My head is not itself. Having had an unpleasant night, and a melancholy day, and having already written a long letter, I do not find myself in point of spirits at all qualified either to burn or shine. The post sets out early on Tuesday. The morning is the only time of exercise with me. In order therefore to keep it open for that purpose, and to comply with your desire of an immediate answer, I give you as much as I can spare of the present evening.

Since I despatched my last, Blair has crept a little further into my favour. As his subjects improve, he improves with them; but upon the whole I account him a dry writer, useful no doubt as an instructor, but as little entertaining as with so much knowledge it is possible to be. His language is (except Swift's) the least figurative I remember to have seen, and the few figures found in it are not always happily employed. I take him to be a critic very little animated by what he reads, who rather reasons about the beauties of an author, than really tastes them; and who finds that a passage is praiseworthy, not because it charms him, but because it is accommodated to the laws of criticism in that case made and provided. I have a little complied with your desire of marginal annotations, and should have dwelt in them more largely, had I read the books to myself; but being reader to the ladies, I have not always time to settle my own opinion of a doubtful expression, much less to suggest an emendation. I have not censured a particular observation in the book, though when I met with it, it displeased me. I this moment recollect it, and may as well therefore note it here. He is commending, and deservedly, that most noble description of a thunder storm in the first Georgic, which ends with

Ingeminant austri et densissimus imber.

Being in haste, I do not refer to the volume for his very words, but my memory will serve me with the matter. When poets describe, he says, they should always select such circumstances of the subject as are least obvious, and therefore most striking. He therefore admires the effects of the thunderbolt splitting mountains, and filling a nation with astonishment, but quarrels with the closing member of the period, as containing particulars of a storm not worthy of Virgil's notice, because obvious to the notice of all. But here I differ from him; not being able to conceive that wind and rain can be improper in the description of a tempest, or how wind and rain could possibly be more poetically described. Virgil is indeed remarkable for finishing his periods well, and never comes to a stop but with the utmost consummate dignity of numbers and expression; and in the instance in question I think his skill in this respect is remarkably displayed. The line is perfectly majectic in its march. As to the wind, it is such only as the word *ingeminant* could describe, and the words *densissimus imber* give one an idea of a shower indeed, but of such a shower as is not very common, and such a one as only Virgil could have done justice to by a single epithet. Far therefore from agreeing with the Doctor in his stricture, I do not think the Æneid contains a nobler line, or a description more magnificently finished.

We are glad that Dr. C——— has singled you out upon this occasion. Your performance we doubt not will justify his choice: fear not—you have a heart that can feel upon charitable occasions, and therefore will not fail you upon this. The burning words will come fast enough, when the sensibility is such as yours.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

April 26, 1784.

WE are glad that your book runs. It will not indeed satisfy those whom nothing could satisfy but your accession to their party; but the liberal will say you do well, and it is in the opinion of such men only that you can feel yourself interested.

I have lately been employed in reading Beattie and Blair's Lectures. The latter I have not yet finished. I find the former the most agreeable of the two, indeed the most entertaining writer upon dry subjects that I ever met with. His imagination is highly poetical, his language easy and elegant, and his manner so familiar, that we seem to be conversing with an old friend, upon terms of the most sociable intercourse, while we read him. Blair is, on the contrary, rather stiff, not that his style is pedantic, but his air is formal. He is a sensible man, and understands his subjects, but too conscious that he is addressing the public, and too solicitous about his success, to indulge himself for a moment in that play of fancy which makes the other so agreeable. In Blair we find a scholar, in Beattie both a scholar and an amiable man; indeed so amiable, that I have wished for his acquaintance ever since I read his book. Having never in my life perused a page of Aristotle I am

glad to have had an opportunity of learning more than (I suppose) he would have taught me, from the writings of two modern critics. I felt myself too a little disposed to compliment my own acumen upon the occasion. For though the art of writing and composing was never much my study, I did not find that they had any great news to tell me. They have assisted me in putting my observations into some method, but have not suggested many, of which I was not by some means or other previously apprised. In fact, critics did not originally beget authors. But authors made critics. Common sense dictated to writers the necessity of method, connexion, and thoughts congruous to the nature of their subject; genius prompted them with embellishments, and then came the critics. Observing the good effects of an attention to these items, they enacted laws for the observance of them in time to come, and, having drawn their rules for good writing from what was actually well written, boasted themselves the inventors of an art which yet the authors of the day had already exemplified. They are however useful in their way, giving us at one view a map of the boundaries which propriety sets to fancy; and serving as judges to whom the public may at once appeal, when pestered with the vagaries of those who have had the hardiness to transgress them.

The candidates for this country have set an example of economy, which other candidates would do well to follow, having come to an agreement on both sides to defray the expenses of their voters, but to open no houses for the entertainment of the rabble; a reform, however, which the rabble did not at all approve of, and testified their dislike of it by a riot. A stage was built, from which the orators had designed to harangue the electors. This became the first victim of their fury. Having very little curiosity to hear what gentlemen could say, who would give them nothing better than words, they broke it in pieces, and threw the fragments upon the hustings. The sheriff, the members, the lawyers, the voters, were instantly put to flight. They rallied, but were again routed by a second assault, like the former. They then proceeded to break the windows of the inn to which they had fled; and a fear prevailing that at night they would fire the town, a proposal was made by the freeholders to face about and endeavour to secure them. At that instant a rioter, dressed in a merry Andrew's jacket, stepped forward and challenged the best man among them. Olney sent the hero to the field, who made him repent of his presumption. Mr. A——— was he. Seizing him by the throat, he shook him—he threw him to the earth, and made the hollowness of his skull resound by the application of his fists, and dragged him into custody without the least damage to his person.—Animated by this example, the other freeholders followed it: and in five minutes twenty-eight out of thirty ragamuffins were safely lodged in gaol. Adieu, my dear friend,

We love you, and are yours, W. & M.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *May* 3, 1784.

The subject of face-painting may be considered (I think) in two points of view. First, there is room for dispute with respect to the consistency of the practice with good morals; and secondly, whether it be on the whole convenient or not, may be a matter worthy of agitation. I set out with all the formality of logical disquisition, but do not promise to observe the same regularity any further than it may comport with my purpose of writing as fast as I can.

As to the immorality of the custom, were I in France, I should see none. On the contrary, it seems in that country to be a symptom of modest consciousness, and a tacit confession of what all know to be true, that French faces have in fact neither red nor white of their own. This humble acknowledgment of a defect looks the more like a virtue, being found among a people not remarkable for humility. Again, before we can prove the practice to be immoral, we must prove immorality in the design of those who use it; either that they intend a deception, or to kindle unlawful desires in the beholders. But the French ladies, so far as their purpose comes in question, must be acquitted of both these charges. Nobody supposes their colour to be natural for a moment, any more than if it were blue or green: and this unambiguous judgment of the matter is owing to two causes: first, to the universal knowledge we have, that French women are naturally brown or yellow, with very few exceptions, and secondly, to the inartificial manner in which they paint: for they do not, as I am most satisfactorily informed, even attempt an imitation of nature, but besmear themselves hastily, and at a venture, anxious only to lay on enough. Where therefore there is no wanton intention, nor a wish to deceive, I can discover no immorality. But in England (I am afraid) our painted ladies are not clearly entitled to the same apology. They even imitate nature with such exactness, that the whole public is sometimes divided into parties, who litigate with great warmth the question, whether painted or not? this was remarkably the case with a Miss B——, whom I well remember. Her roses and lilies were never discovered to be spurious, till she attained an age, that made the supposition of their being natural impossible. This anxiety to be not merely red and white, which is all they aim at in France, but to be thought very beautiful, and much more

beautiful than nature has made them, is a symptom not very favourable to the idea we would wish to entertain of the chastity, purity, and modesty of our country-women. That they are guilty of a design to deceive, is certain. Otherwise why so much art? and if to deceive, wherefore and with what purpose? Certainly either to gratify vanity of the silliest kind, or, which is still more criminal, to decoy and inveigle, and carry on more successfully the business of temptation. Here therefore my opinion splits itself into two opposite sides upon the same question. I can suppose a French woman, though painted an inch deep, to be a virtuous, discreet, excellent character; and in no instance should I think the worse of one because she was painted. But an English belle must pardon me, if I have not the same charity for her. She is at least an impostor, whether she cheats me or not, because she means to do so; and it is well if that be all the censure she deserves.

This brings me to my second class of ideas upon this topic: and here I feel that I should be fearfully puzzled, were I called upon to recommend the practice on the score of convenience. If a husband chose that his wife should paint, perhaps it might be her duty, as well as her interest, to comply. But I think he would not much consult his own, for reasons that will follow. In the first place, she would admire herself the more; and in the next, if she managed the matter well, she might be more admired by others; an acquisition that might bring her virtue under trials, to which otherwise it might never have been exposed. In no other case, however, can I imagine the practice in this country to be either expedient or convenient. As a general one, it certainly is not expedient, because in general English women have no occasion for it. A swarthy complexion is a rarity here; and the sex, especially since the inoculation has been so much in use, have very little cause to complain that nature has not been kind to them in the article of complexion. They may hide and spoil a good one, but they can not (at least they hardly can) give themselves a better. But even if they could, there is yet a tragedy in the sequel, which should make them tremble. I understand that in France, though the use of rouge be general, the use of white paint is far from being so. In England, she that uses one, commonly uses both. Now all white paints, or lotions, or whatever they be called, are mercurial, consequently poisonous, consequently ruinous in time to the constitution. The Miss B—— above mentioned was a miserable witness of this truth, it being certain that her flesh fell from her bones before she died. Lady C——— was hardly a less melancholy proof of it; and a London physician perhaps, were he at liberty to blab, could publish a bill of female mortality, of a length that would astonish us.

For these reasons, I utterly condemn the practice, as it obtains in England: and for a reason superior to all these, I must disapprove it. I can not indeed discover that Scripture forbids it in so many words. But that anxious solitude about the person, which such an artifice evidently betrays, is, I am sure, contrary to the tenor and spirit of it throughout. Show me a woman with a painted face, and I will show you a woman whose heart is set on things of the earth, and not on things above. But this observation of mine applies to it only when it is an imitative art. For in the use of French women, I think it as innocent as in the use of the wild Indian, who draws a circle round her face, and makes two spots, perhaps blue, perhaps white, in the middle of it. Such are my thoughts upon the matter. *Vive, valeque.*

Yours ever, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

May 8, 1784.

You do well to make your letters merry ones, though not very merry yourself, and that both for my sake and your own; for your own sake, because it sometimes happens, that by assuming an air of cheerfulness we become cheerful in reality; and for mine, because I have always more need of a laugh than a cry, being somewhat disposed to melancholy by natural temperament, as well as by other causes.

It was long since, and even in the infancy of John Gilpin, recommended to me by a lady now at Bristol, to write a sequel. But having always observed that authors, elated with the success of a first part, have fallen below themselves, when they have attempted a second, I had more prudence than to take her counsel. I want you to read the history of that hero, published by Bladon, and to tell me what it is made of. But buy it not. For, puffed as it is in the papers, it can be but a bookseller's job, and must be dear at the price of two shillings. In the last pacquet but one that I received from Johnson, he asked me if I had any improvements of John Gilpin in hand, or if I designed any; for that to print only the original again would be to publish what has been hacknied in every magazine, in every newspaper, and in every street. I answered, that the copy which I sent him contained two or three small variations from the first, except which I had none to propose, and that if he thought him now too trite to make a part of my volume, I should willingly acquiesce in his judgment. I take it for granted therefore that he will not bring up the rear of my

Poems according to my first intention, and shall not be sorry for the omission. It may spring from a principle of pride; but spring it from what it may, I feel, and have long felt, a disinclination to a public avowal that he is mine; and since he became so popular, I have felt it more than ever; not that I should have expressed a scruple, if Johnson had not. But a fear has suggested itself to me, that I might expose myself to a charge of vanity by admitting him into my book, and that some people would impute it to me as a crime. Consider what the world is made of, and you will not find my suspicions chimerical. Add to this, that when, on correcting the latter part of the fifth book of the Task, I came to consider the solemnity and sacred nature of the subjects there handled, it seemed to me an incongruity at the least, not to call it by a hasher name, to follow up such premises with such a conclusion. I am well content therefore with having laughed, and made others laugh, and will build my hopes of success, as a poet, upon more important matter.

In our printing business we now jog on merrily enough. The coming week will I hope bring me to an end of the Task, and the next fortnight to an end of the whole. I am glad to have Paley on my side in the affair of education. He is certainly on all subjects a sensible man, and on such, a wise one. But I am mistaken, if Tirocinium do not make some of my friends angry, and procure me enemies not a few. There is a sting in verse, that prose neither has, nor can have; and I do not know that schools in the gross, and especially public schools, have ever been so pointedly condemned before. But they are become a nuisance, a pest, an abomination, and it is fit that the eyes and noses of mankind should, if possible, be opened to perceive it.

This is indeed an author's letter; but is it not an author's letter to his friend. If you will be the friend of an author, you must expect such letters. Come July, and come yourself, with as many of your exterior selves as can possibly come with you.

Yours, my dear William, affectionately, and with your mother's remembrances, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

My dear friend, *May* 22, 1784.

I am glad to have received at last an account of Dr. Johnson's favourable opinion of my book. I thought it wanting, and had long since concluded that, not having had the happiness to please him, I owed my ignorance of his sentiments to the tenderness of my friends at Hoxton, who would not mortify me with an account of his disapprobation. It occurs to me that I owe him thanks for interposing between me and the resentment of the Reviewers, who seldom show mercy to an advocate for evangelical truth, whether in prose or verse. I therefore enclose a short acknowledgment, which, if you see no impropriety in the measure, you can I imagine without much difficulty convey to him through the hands of Mr. Latrobe. If on any account you judge it an inexpedient step, you can very easily suppress the letter.

I pity Mr. Bull. What harder task can any man undertake than the management of those, who have reached the age of manhood without having ever felt the force of authority, or passed through any of the preparatory parts of education? I had either forgot, or never adverted to the circumstance, that his disciples were to be men. At present, however, I am not surprised that, being such, they are found disobedient, untractable, insolent, and conceited; qualities, that generally prevail in the minds of adults in exact proportion to their ignorance. He dined with us since I received your last. It was on Thursday that he was here. He came dejected, burthened, full of complaints. But we sent him away cheerful. He is very sensible of the prudence, delicacy, and attention to his character, which the society have discovered in their conduct towards him upon this occasion; and indeed it does them honour; for it were past all enduring, if a charge of insufficiency should obtain a moment's regard, when brought by five such coxcombs against a man of his erudition and ability. Lady Austen is gone to Bath.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

June 5, 1784.

When you told me that the critique upon my volume was written, though not by Dr. Johnson himself, yet by a friend of his, to whom he recommended the book and the business, I inferred from that expression that I was indebted to him for an active interposition in my favour, and consequently that he had a right to thanks. But now I concur entirely in sentiment with you, and heartily second your vote for the suppression of thanks which do not seem to be much called for. Yet even now were it possible that I could fall into his company, I should not think a slight acknowledgment misapplied. I was no other way anxious about his opinion, nor could be so, after you and some others had given a favourable one, than it was natural I should be, knowing, as I did, that his opinion had been consulted.

I am affectionately yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

My dear William, *July* 3, 1784.

We rejoice that you had a safe journey, and though we should have rejoiced still more had you

had no occasion for a physician, we are glad that, having had need of one, you had the good fortune to find him. Let us hear soon that his advice has proved effectual, and that you are delivered from all ill symptoms.

Thanks for the care you have taken to furnish me with a dictionary. It is rather strange that at my time of life, and after a youth spent in classical pursuits, I should want one; and stranger still that, being possessed at present of only one Latin author in the world, I should think it worth while to purchase one. I say that it is strange, and indeed I think it so myself. But I have a thought that when my present labours of the pen are ended, I may go to school again, and refresh my spirits by a little intercourse with the Mantuan and the Sabine bard, and perhaps by a reperusal of some others, whose works we generally lay by at that period of life when we are best qualified to read them, when, the judgment and the taste being formed, their beauties are least likely to be overlooked.

This change of wind and weather comforts me, and I should have enjoyed the first fine morning I have seen this month with a peculiar relish, if our new tax-maker had not put me out of temper. I am angry with him, not only for the matter, but for the manner of his proposal. When he lays his impost upon horses, he is jocular, and laughs, though considering that wheels, and miles, and grooms, were taxed before, a graver countenance upon the occasion would have been more decent. But he provoked me still more by reasoning as he does on the justification of the tax upon candles. Some families, he says, will suffer little by it—Why? because they are so poor, that they can not afford themselves more than ten pounds in the year. Excellent! They can use but few, therefore they will pay but little, and consequently will be but little burthened, an argument which for its cruelty and effrontery seems worthy of a hero—but he does not avail himself of the whole force of it, nor with all his wisdom had sagacity enough to see that it contains, when pushed to its utmost extent, a free discharge and acquittal of the poor from the payment of any tax at all; a commodity, being once made too expensive for their pockets, will cost them nothing, for they will not buy it. Rejoice therefore, O ye pennyless! the minister will indeed send you to bed in the dark, but your remaining halfpenny will be safe; instead of being spent in the useless luxury of candlelight, it will buy you a roll for breakfast, which you will eat no doubt with gratitude to the man who so kindly lessens the number of your disbursements, and, while he seems to threaten your money, saves it. I wish he would remember, that the halfpenny, which government imposes, the shopkeeper will swell to two-pence. I wish he would visit the miserable huts of our lace-makers at Olney, and see them working in the winter months, by the light of a farthing candle, from four in the afternoon till midnight: I wish he had laid his tax upon the ten thousand lamps that illuminate the Pantheon, upon the flambeaux that wait upon ten thousand chariots and sedans in an evening, and upon the wax candles that give light to ten thousand card tables. I wish in short that he would consider the pockets of the poor as sacred, and that to tax a people already so necessitous, is but to discourage the little industry that is left among us, by driving the laborious to despair.

A neighbour of mine, in Silver-end, keeps an ass; the ass lives on the other side of the garden-wall, and I am writing in the green-house: it happens that he is this morning most musically disposed, whether cheered by the fine weather, or by some new tune which he has just acquired, or by finding his voice more harmonious than usual. It would be cruel to mortify so fine a singer, therefore I do not tell him that he interrupts and hinders me, but I venture to tell you so, and to plead his performance in excuse of my abrupt conclusion.

I send you the goldfinches, with which you will do as you see good. We have an affectionate remembrance of your last visit, and of all our friends at Stock.

Believe me ever yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *July* 5, 1784.

A DEARTH of materials, a consciousness that my subjects are for the most part, and must be uninteresting and unimportant, but above all a poverty of animal spirits, that makes writing such a great fatigue to me, have occasioned my choice of smaller paper. Acquiesce in the justness of these reasons for the present; and if ever the times should mend with me, I sincerely promise to amend with them.

Homer says on a certain occasion, that Jupiter, when he was wanted at home, was gone to partake of an entertainment provided for him by the Ethiopians. If by Jupiter we understand the weather, or the season, as the ancients frequently did, we may say that our English Jupiter has been absent on account of some such invitation: during the whole month of June he left us to experience almost the rigours of winter. This fine day however affords us some hope that the feast is ended, and that we shall enjoy his company without the interference of his Æthiopian friends again.

Is it possible that the wise men of antiquity could entertain a real reverence for the fabulous rubbish, which they dignified with the name of religion? We, who have been favoured from our infancy with so clear a light, are perhaps hardly

competent to decide the question, and may strive in vain to imagine the absurdities that even a good understanding may receive as truths, when totally unaided by revelation. It seems however that men, whose conceptions upon other subjects were often sublime, whose reasoning powers were undoubtedly equal to our own, and whose management in matters of jurisprudence that required a very industrious examination of evidence, was as acute and subtle as that of a modern attorney-general, could not be the dupes of such imposture as a child among us would detect and laugh at. Juvenal, I remember, introduces one of his satires with an observation that there were some in his day who had the hardiness to laugh at the stories of Tartarus, and Styx, and Charon, and of the frogs that croak upon the banks of Lethe, giving his reader at the same time cause to suspect that he was himself one of that profane number. Horace, on the other hand, declares in sober sadness that he would not for all the world get into a boat with a man who had divulged the Eleusinian mysteries. Yet we know that those mysteries, whatever they might be, were altogether as unworthy to be esteemed divine as the mythology of the vulgar. How then must we determine? If Horace were a good and orthodox heathen, how came Juvenal to be such an ungracious libertine in principle, as to ridicule the doctrines which the other held as sacred? Their opportunities of information, and their mental advantages were equal. I feel myself rather inclined to believe, that Juvenal's avowed infidelity was sincere, and that Horace was no better than a canting hypocritical professor.

You must grant me a dispensation for saying any thing, whether it be sense or nonsense, upon the subject of politics. It is truly a matter in which I am so little interested, that were it not that it sometimes serves me for a theme when I can find no other, I should never mention it. I would forfeit a large sum if, after advertising a month in the gazette, the minister of the day, whoever he may be, could discover a man that cares about him or his measures so little as I do. When I say that I would forfeit a large sum, I mean to have it understood that I would forfeit such a sum, if I had it. If Mr. Pitt be indeed a virtuous man, as such I respect him. But at the best, I fear, that he will have to say at least with Æneas,

Si Pergama dextrâ
Defendi possent, etiâm hâc defensa fuissent.

Be he what he may, I do not like his taxes. At least I am much disposed to quarrel with some of them. The additional duties upon candles, by which the poor will be much affected, hurts me most. He says indeed that they will but little feel it, because even now they can hardly afford the use of them. He had certainly put no compassion into his budget, when he produced from it this tax, and such a argument to support it. Justly translated it seems to amount to this—'Make the necessaries of life too expensive for the poor to reach them, and you will save their money. If they buy but few candles, they will pay but little tax; and if they buy none, the tax, as to them, will be annihilated.' True. But, in the mean time they will break their shins against their furniture, if they have any, and will be but little the richer, when the hours, in which they might work, if they could see, shall be deducted.

I have bought a great dictionary, and want nothing but Latin authors to finish me with the use of it. Had I purchased them first, I had begun at the right end. But I could not afford it. I beseech you admire my prudence.

Vivite, valete, et mementote nostrum.

Yours affectionately, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR WILLIAM, *July* 12, 1784.

I think with you that Vinny's line is not pure. If he knew any authority that would have justified his substitution of a participle for a substantive, he would have done well to have noted it in the margin. But I am much inclined to think that he did not Poets are sometimes exposed to difficulties insurmountable by lawful means, whence I imagine was originally derived that indulgence that allows them the use of what is called the *poetica licentia*. But that liberty, I believe, contents itself with the abbreviation or protraction of a word, or an alteration in the quantity of a syllable, and never presumes to trespass upon grammatical propriety. I have dared to attempt to correct my master, but am not bold enough to say that I have succeeded. Neither am I sure that my memory serves me correctly with the line that follows; but when I recollect the English, am persuaded that it can not differ much from the true one. This therefore, is my edition of the passage—

Basia amatori tot tum permissa beato.

Or,

Basia quæ juveni indulsit Susanna beato
Navarcha optaret maximus esse sua.

The preceding lines I have utterly forgotten, and am consequently at a loss to know whether the distich, thus managed, will connect itself with them easily, and as it ought.

We thank you for the drawing of your house. I never knew my idea of what I had never seen resemble the original so much. At some time or other you have doubtless given me an exact account of it, and I have retained the faithful im-

pression made by your description. It is a comfortable abode, and the time I hope will come when I shall enjoy more than the mere representation of it.

I have not yet read the last Review, but dipping into it I accidentally fell upon their account of Hume's Essay on Suicide. I am glad that they have liberality enough to condemn the licentiousness of an author whom they so much admire. I say liberality, for there is as much bigotry in the world to that man's errors as there is in the hearts of some sectaries to their peculiar modes and tenets. He is the Pope of thousands, as blind and presumptuous as himself. God certainly infatuates those who will not see. It were otherwise impossible, that a man naturally shrewd and sensible, and whose understanding has had all the advantages of constant exercise and cultivation, could have satisfied himself, or have hoped to satisfy others with such palpable sophistry as has not even the grace of fallacy to recommend it. His silly assertion that because it would be no sin to divert the course of the Danube, therefore it is none to let out a few ounces of blood from an artery, would justify not suicide only but homicide also. For the lives of ten thousand men are of less consequence to their country than the course of that river to the regions through which it flows. Population would soon make society amends for the loss of her ten thousand members, but the loss of the Danube would be felt by all the millions that dwell upon its banks, to all generations. But the life of a man and the water of a river can never come into competition with each other in point of value, unless in the estimation of an unprincipled philosopher.

I thank you for your offer of classics. When I want I will borrow. Horace is my own. Homer, with a clavis, I have had possession of some years. They are the property of Mr. Jones. A Virgil, the property of Mr. S———, I have had as long. I am nobody in the affair of tenses, unless when you are present.

Yours ever, W. C.

TO THE REV. J. NEWTON.

July 19, 1784.

In those days when Bedlam was open to the cruel curiosity of holiday ramblers, I have been a visiter there. Though a boy, I was not altogether insensible of the misery of the poor captives, nor destitute of feeling for them. But the madness of some of them had such an humorous air, and displayed itself in so many whimsical freaks, that it was impossible not to be entertained, at the same time that I was angry with myself for being so. A line of Bourne's is very expressive of the spectacle which this world exhibits, tragi-comical as the incidents of it are, absurd in themselves, but terrible in their consequences;

Sunt res humanæ flebile ludibrium.

An instance of this deplorable merriment has occurred in the course of last week at Olney. A feast gave the occasion to a catastrophe truly shocking. Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO THE REV. J. NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *July* 28, 1784.

I may perhaps be short, but am not willing that you should go to Lymington without first having had a line from me. I know that place well, having spent six weeks there, above twenty years ago. The town is neat, and the country delightful. You walk well, and will consequently find a part of the coast, called Half-Cliff, within the reach of your ten toes. It was a favourite walk of mine; to the best of my remembrance, about three miles distance from Lymington. There you may stand upon the beach, and contemplate the Needle-rock. At least you might have done so twenty years ago. But since that time I think it is fallen from its base, and is drowned, and is no longer a visible object of contemplation. I wish you may pass your time there happily, as in all probability you will, perhaps usefully too to others, undoubtedly so to yourself.

The manner in which you have been previously made acquainted with Mr. Gilpin gives a providential air to your journey, and affords reason to hope that you may be charged with a message to him. I admire him as a biographer. But as Mrs. Unwin and I were talking of him last night, we could not but wonder that a man should see so much excellence in the lives, and so much glory and beauty in the deaths of the martyrs, whom he has recorded, and at the same time disapprove the principles that produced the very conduct he admired. It seems however a step towards the truth, to applaud the fruits of it; and one can not help thinking that one step more would put him in possession of the truth itself. By your means may he be enabled to take it!

We are obliged to you for the preference you would have given to Olney, had not providence determined your course another way. But as, when we saw you last summer, you gave us no reason to expect you this, we are the less disappointed. At your age and mine, biennial visits have such a gap between them that we can not promise ourselves upon those terms very numerous future interviews. But whether ours are to be many or few, you will always be welcome to me, for the sake of the comfortable days that are past. In

my present state of mind my friendship for you indeed is as warm as ever. But I feel myself very indifferently qualified to be your companion. Other days than these inglorious and unprofitable ones are promised me, and when I see them I shall rejoice.

I saw the advertisement of your adversary's book. He is happy at least in this, that whether he have brains or none, he strikes without the danger of being stricken again. He could not wish to engage in a controversy upon easier terms. The other, whose publication is postponed till Christmas, is resolved, I suppose, to do something. But do what he will he can not prove that you have not been aspersed, or that you have not refuted the charge; which unless he can do, I think he will do little to the purpose.

Mrs. Unwin thinks of you, and always with a grateful recollection of yours and Mrs. Newton's kindness. She has had a nervous fever lately. But I hope she is better. The weather forbids walking, a prohibition hurtful to us both.

We heartily wish you a good journey, and are affectionately yours, W. C. and M. U.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Aug.* 14, 1784.

I give you joy of a journey performed without trouble or danger. You have travelled five hundred miles without having encountered either. Some neighbours of ours, about a fortnight since, made an excursion only to a neighbouring village and brought home with them fractured skulls, and broken limbs, and one of them is dead. For my own part, I seem pretty much exempted from the dangers of the road. Thanks to that tender interest and concern which the legislature takes in my security! Having no doubt their fears lest so precious a life should determine too soon, and by some untimely stroke of misadventure, they have made wheels and horses so expensive that I am not likely to owe my death to either.

Your mother and I continue to visit Weston daily, and find in those agreeable bowers such amusement as leaves us but little room to regret that we can go no further. Having touched that theme, I can not abstain from the pleasure of telling you that our neighbours in that place, being about to leave it for some time, and meeting us there but a few evenings before their departue, entreated us during their absence to consider the garden, and all its contents, as our own, and to gather whatever we liked, without the least scruple. We accordingly picked strawberries as often as we went, and brought home as many bundles of honey-suckles as served to perfume our dwelling till they returned.

Once more, by the aid of Lord Dartmouth, I find myself a voyager in the Pacific ocean. In our last night's lecture we made our acquaintance with the island of Hapaee, where we had never been before. The French and Italians, it seems, have but little cause to plume themselves on account of their achievements in the dancing way; and we may hereafter, without much repining at it, acknowledge their superiority in that art. They are equalled, perhaps excelled by savages. How wonderful, that without any intercourse with the politer world, and having made no proficiency in any other accomplishment, they should in this however have made themselves such adepts, that for regularity and grace of motion they might even be our masters. How wonderful too, that with a tub and a stick they should be able to produce such harmony, as persons accustomed to the sweetest music can not but hear with pleasure. Is it not very difficult to account for the striking difference of character, that obtains among the inhabitants of these islands? Many of them are near neighbours to each other. Their opportunities of improvement much the same; yet some of them are in a degree polite, discover symptoms of taste, and have a sense of elegance; while others are as rude as we naturally expect to find a people who have never had any communication with the northern hemisphere. These volumes furnish much matter of philosophical speculation, and often entertain me even while I am not employed in reading them.

I am sorry you have not been able to ascertain the doubtful intelligence I have received on the subject of court skirts and bosoms. I am now every day occupied in giving all the grace I can to my new production, and in transcribing it I shall soon arrive at the passage that censures that folly, which I shall be loth to expunge, but which I must not spare, unless the criminals can be convicted. The world however is not so unproductive of subjects of censure, but that it may possibly supply me with some other that may serve me as well.

If you know any body that is writing, or intends to write, an epic poem on the new regulation of *franks*, you may give him my compliments, and these two lines for a beginning—

> Heu quot amatores nunc torquet epistola rara!
> Vectigal certum, perituraque gratia *Franki!*

Yours faithfully, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *August* 16, 1784.

Had you not expressed a desire to hear from me before you take leave of Lymington, I certainly should not have answered you so soon. Know-

ing the place, and the amusements it affords, I should have had more modesty than to suppose myself capable of adding any thing to your present entertainments worthy to rank with them. I am not however totally destitute of such pleasures as an inland country may pretend to. If my windows do not command a view of the ocean, at least they look out upon a profusion of mignonette; which, if it be not so grand an object, is however quite as fragrant: and if I have not a hermit in a grotto, I have nevertheless myself in a green-house, a less venerable figure perhaps, but not at all less animated than he; nor are we in this nook altogether furnished with such means of philosophical experiment and speculation as at present the world rings with. On Thursday morning last, we sent up a balloon from Emberton meadow. Thrice it rose, and as oft descended, and in the evening it performed another flight at Newport, where it went up, and came down no more. Like the arrow discharged at the pigeon in the Trojan games, it kindled in the air, and was consumed in a moment. I have not heard what interpretation the soothsayers have given to the omen, but shall wonder a little if the Newton shepherd prognosticate any thing less from it than the most bloody war that was ever waged in Europe.

I am reading Cook's last voyage, and am much pleased and amused with it. It seems that in some of the Friendly isles, they excel so much in dancing, and perform that operation with such exquisite delicacy and grace, that they are not surpassed even upon our European stages. O! that Vestris had been in the ship, that he might have seen himself outdone by a savage. The paper indeed tells us that the queen of France has clapped this king of capers up in prison, for declining to dance before her, on a pretence of sickness, when in fact he was in perfect health. If this be true, perhaps he may by this time be prepared to second such a wish as mine, and to think that the durance he suffers would be well exchanged for a dance at Anamooka. I should however as little have expected to hear that these islanders had such consummate skill in an art, that requires so much taste in the conduct of the person, as that they were good mathematicians and astronomers. Defective as they are in every branch of knowledge, and in every other species of refinement, it seems wonderful that they should arrive at such perfection in the dance, which some of our English gentlemen, with all the assistance of French instruction, find it impossible to learn. We must conclude therefore that particular nations have a genius for particular feats, and that our neighbours in France, and our friends in the South sea, have minds very nearly akin, though they inhabit countries so very remote from each other.

Mrs. Unwin remembers to have been in company with Mr. Gilpin at her brother's. She thought him very sensible and polite, and consequently very agreeable.

We are truly glad that Mrs. Newton and yourself are so well, and that there is reason to hope that Eliza is better. You will learn from this letter that we are so, and that for my own part I am not quite so low in spirits as at some times. Learn too, what you knew before, that we love you all, and that I am

Your affectionate friend, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Olney, Sept.* 11, 1784.

You have my thanks for the inquiries you have made. Despairing however of meeting with such confirmation of that new mode, as would warrant a general stricture, I had, before the receipt of your last, discarded the passage in which I had censured it. I am proceeding in my transcript with all possible despatch, having nearly finished the fourth book, and hoping, by the end of the month, to have completed the work. When finished, that no time may be lost, I purpose taking the first opportunity to transmit it to Leman-street; but must beg that you will give me in your next an exact direction, that it may proceed to the mark without any hazard of a miscarriage. A second transcript of it would be a labour I should very reluctantly undertake; for though I have kept copies of all the material alterations, there are so many minutiæ of which I have made none; it is besides slavish work, and of all occupations that which I dislike the most. I know that you will lose no time in reading it, but I must beg you likewise to lose none in conveying it to Johnson, that if he chooses to print it, it may go to the press immediately; if not, that it may be offered directly to your friend Longman, or any other. Not that I doubt Johnson's acceptance of it, for he will find it more *ad captum populi* than the former. I have not numbered the lines, except of the four first books, which amount to three thousand two hundred and seventy-six. I imagine therefore that the whole contains above five thousand. I mention this circumstance now, because it may save him some trouble in casting the size of the book; and I might possibly forget it in another letter.

About a fortnight since, we had a visit from Mr. ——, whom I had not seen many years. He introduced himself to us very politely, with many thanks on his own part, and on the part of his

family, for the amusement which my book had afforded them. He said he was sure that it must make its way, and hoped that I had not layed down the pen. I only told him in general terms, that the use of the pen was necessary to my well being, but gave him no hint of this last production. He said that one passage in particular had absolutely electrified him, meaning the description of the Briton in Table Talk. He seemed indeed to emit some sparks when he mentioned it. I was glad to have that picture noticed by a man of a cultivated mind, because I had always thought well of it myself, and had never heard it distinguished before. Assure yourself, my William, and though I would not write thus freely on the subject of me or mine to any but yourself, the pleasure I have in doing it is a most innocent one, and partakes not in the least degree, so far as my conscience is to be credited, of that vanity with which authors are in general so justly chargeable. Whatever I do, I confess that I most sincerely wish to do it well, and when I have reason to hope that I have succeeded, am pleased indeed, but not proud; for He, who has placed every thing out of the reach of man, except what he freely gives him, has made it impossible for a reflecting mind, that knows this, to indulge so silly a passion for a moment. Yours, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Sept.* 11, 1784.

I HAVE never seen Dr. Cotton's book, concerning which your sisters question me, nor did I know, till you mentioned it, that he had written any thing newer than his Visions. I have no doubt that it is so far worthy of him, as to be pious and sensible, and I believe no man living is better qualified to write on such subjects as his title seems to announce. Some years have passed since I heard from him, and considering his great age, it is probable that I shall hear from him no more; but I shall always respect him. He is truly a philosopher, according to my judgment of the character, every tittle of his knowledge in natural subjects being connected in his mind with the firm belief of an Omnipotent agent.

Yours, &c. W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Sept.* 18, 1784.

FOLLOWING your good example, I lay before me a sheet of my largest paper. It was this moment fair and unblemished, but I have begun to blot it, and having begun am not likely to cease till I have spoiled it. I have sent you many a sheet that in my judgment of it has been very unworthy of your acceptance, but my conscience was in some measure satisfied by reflecting, that if it were good for nothing, at the same time it cost you nothing, except the trouble of reading it. But the case is altered now. You must pay a solid price for frothy matter, and though I do not absolutely pick your pocket, yet you lose your money, and, as the saying is, are never the wiser.

My green-house is never so pleasant as when we are just upon the point of being turned out of it. The gentleness of the autumnal suns, and the calmness of this latter season, make it a much more agreeable retreat than we ever find it in the summer; when, the winds being generally brisk, we can not cool it by admitting a sufficient quantity of air, without being at the same time incommoded by it. But now I sit with all the windows and the door wide open, and am regaled with the scent of every flower in a garden as full of flowers as I have known how to make it. We keep no bees, but if I lived in a hive I should hardly hear more of their music. All the bees in the neighbourhood resort to a bed of mignonette, opposite to the window, and pay me for the honey they get out of it by a hum, which, though rather monotonous, is as agreeable to my ear as the whistling of my linnets. All the sounds that nature utters are delightful, at least in this country. I should not perhaps find the roaring of lions in Africa, or of bears in Russia, very pleasing; but I know no beast in England whose voice I do not account musical, save and except always the braying of an ass. The notes of all our birds and fowls please me, without one exception. I should not indeed think of keeping a goose in a cage, that I might hang him up in the parlour for the sake of his melody, but a goose upon a common, or in a farm yard, is no bad performer; and as to insects, if the black beetle, and beetles indeed of all hues, will keep out of my way, I have no objection to any of the rest; on the contrary, in whatever key they sing, from the gnat's fine treble, to the base of the humble bee, I admire them all. Seriously however it strikes me as a very observable instance of providential kindness to man, that such an exact accord has been contrived between his ear, and the sounds with which, at least in a rurul situation, it is almost every moment visited. All the world is sensible of the uncomfortable effect that certain sounds have upon the nerves, and consequently upon the spirits—And if a sinful world had been filled with such as would have curdled the blood, and have made the sense of hearing a perpetual inconvenience, I do not know that we should have had a right to complain. But now the fields, the woods, the gardens, have each their concert, and the ear of man is for ever regaled by creatures who seem only to please themselves. Even the ears that are

deaf to the Gospel are continually entertained, though without knowing it, by sounds for which they are solely indebted to its author. There is somewhere in infinite space a world that does not roll within the precincts of mercy, and as it is reasonable, and even scriptural, to suppose that there is music in Heaven, in those dismal regions perhaps the reverse of it is found; tones so dismal, as to make wo itself more insupportable, and to acuminate even despair. But my paper admonishes me in good time to draw the reins, and to check the descent of my fancy into deeps, with which she is but too familiar. Our best love attends you both. Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR WILLIAM, *Oct.* 2, 1784.

A POET can but ill spare time for prose. The truth is, I am in haste to finish my transcript, that you may receive it time enough to give it a leisurely reading before you go to town; which whether I shall be able to accomplish, is at present uncertain. I have the whole punctuation to settle, which in blank verse is of the last importance, and of a species peculiar to that composition; for I know no use of points, unless to direct the voice, the management of which, in the reading blank verse, being more difficult than in the reading of any other poetry, requires perpetual hints and notices, to regulate the inflections, cadences, and pauses. This however is an affair that in spite of grammarians must be left pretty much *ad libitum scriptoris*. For I suppose every author points according to his own reading. If I can send the parcel to the wagon by one o'clock next Wednesday, you will have it on Saturday the ninth. But this is more than I expect. Perhaps I shall not be able to despatch it till the eleventh, in which case it will not reach you till the thirteenth. I rather think, that the latter of these two periods will obtain, because, besides the punctuation, I have the argument of each book to transcribe. Add to this, that in writing for the printer, I am forced to write my best, which makes slow work. The motto of the whole is—*Fit surculus arbor*. If you can put the author's name under it, do so—if not, it must go without one. For I know not to whom to ascribe it. It was a motto taken by a certain prince of Orange, in the year 1733, but not to a poem of his own writing, or indeed to any poem at all, but, as I think, to a medal.

Mr. ——— is a Cornish member, but for what place in Cornwall I know not. All I know of him is, that I saw him once clap his two hands upon a rail, meaning to leap over it. But he did not think the attempt a safe one, and therefore took them off again. He was in company with Mr. Throckmorton. With that gentleman we drank chocolate, since I wrote last. The occasion of our visit was, as usual, a balloon. Your mother invited her, and I him, and they promised to return the visit, but have not yet performed. *Tout le monde se trouvoit là*, as you may suppose, among the rest, Mrs. W———. She was driven to the door by her son, a boy of seventeen, in a phaeton, drawn by four horses from Lilliput. This is an ambiguous expression, and should what I write now be legible a thousand years hence, might puzzle commentators. Be it known therefore to the Aldusses and the Stevenses of ages yet to come, that I do not mean to affirm that Mrs. W——— herself came from Lilliput that morning, or indeed that she was ever there, but merely to describe the horses, as being so diminutive, that they might be, with propriety, said to be Lilliputian.

The privilege of franking having been so cropped, I know not in what manner I and my bookseller are to settle the conveyance of proof sheets hither, and back again. They must travel I imagine by coach, a large quantity of them at a time; for, like other authors, I find myself under a poetical necessity of being frugal.

We love you all, jointly, and separately, as usual. W. C.

I have not seen, nor shall see, the Dissenter's answer to Mr. Newton, unless you can furnish me with it.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Oct.* 9, 1784.

THE pains you have taken to disengage our correspondence from the expense with which it was threatened, convincing me that my letters, trivial as they are, are yet acceptable to you, encourage me to observe my usual punctuality. You complain of unconnected thoughts. I believe there is not a head in the world but might utter the same complaint, and that all would do so, were they all as attentive to their own vagaries, and as honest as yours. The description of your meditations at least suits mine; perhaps I can go a step beyond you, upon the same ground, and assert with the strictest truth that I not only do not think with connexion, but that I frequently do not think at all. I am much mistaken if I do not often catch myself napping in this way; for when I ask myself what was the last idea (as the ushers at Westminster ask an idle boy what was the last word,) I am not able to answer, but like the boy in question, am obliged to stare and say nothing. This may be a very unphilosophical account of myself, and may clash very much with the general opinion of the learned, that the soul being an active principle, and her activity consisting in thought, she

must consequently always think. But pardon me, messieurs les philosophes, there are moments when, if I think at all, I am utterly unconscious of doing so, and the thought, and the consciousness of it, seem to me at least, who am no philosopher, to be inseparable from each other. Perhaps however we may both be right; and if you will grant me that I do not always think, I will in return concede to you the activity you contend for, and will qualify the difference between us by supposing that though the soul be in herself an active principle, the influence of her present union with a principle that is not such, makes her often dormant, suspends her operations, and affects her with a sort of deliquium, in which she suffers a temporary loss of all her functions. I have related to you my experience truly, and without disguise; you must therefore either admit my assertion, that the soul does not necessarily always act, or deny that mine is a human soul: a negative that I am sure you will not easily prove. So much for a dispute which I little thought of being engaged in to-day.

Last night I had a letter from Lord Dartmouth. It was to apprise me of the safe arrival of Cook's last voyage, which he was so kind as to lend me, in St. Jame's Square. The reading of those volumes afforded me much amusement, and I hope some instruction. No observation however forced itself upon me with more violence than one, that I could not help making on the death of Captain Cook. God is a jealous God, and at Owhyhee the poor man was content to be worshipped. From that moment, the remarkable interposition of Providence in his favour, was converted into an opposition that thwarted all his purposes. He left the scene of his deification, but was driven back to it by a most violent storm, in which he suffered more than in any that had preceded it. When he departed he left his worshippers still infatuated with an idea of his godship, consequently well disposed to serve him. At his return he found them sullen, distrustful, and mysterious. A trifling theft was committed, which, by a blunder of his own in pursuing the thief after the property had been restored, was magnified to an affair of the last importance. One of their favourite chiefs was killed too by a blunder. Nothing, in short, but blunder and mistake attended him, till he fell breathless into the water, and then all was smooth again. The world indeed will not take notice, or see, that the dispensation bore evident marks of Divine displeasure; but a mind I think in any degree spiritual can not overlook them. We know from truth itself, that the death of Herod was for a similar offence. But Herod was in no sense a believer in God, nor had enjoyed half the opportunities with which our poor countryman had been favoured. It may be urged perhaps that he was in jest, that he meant nothing but his own amusement, and that of his companions. I doubt it. He knows little of the heart, who does not know that even in a sensible man it is flattered by every species of exaltation. But be it so, that he was in sport—it was not humane, to say no worse of it, to sport with the ignorance of his friends, to mock their simplicity, to humour and acquiesce in their blind credulity. Besides, though a stock or stone may be worshipped blameless, a baptized man may not. He knows what he does, and by suffering such honours to be paid him, incurs the guilt of sacrilege.*

We are glad that you are so happy in your church, in your society, and in all your connexions. I have not left myself room to say any thing of the love we feel for you.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR WILLIAM, *Oct.* 10, 1784.

I SEND you four quires of verse, which having sent, I shall dismiss from my thoughts, and think no more of, till I see them in print. I have not after all found time or industry enough, to give the last hand to the points. I believe however they are not very erroneous, though in so long a work, and in a work that requires nicety in this particular, some inaccuracies will escape. Where you find any, you will oblige me by correcting them.

In some passages, especially in the second book, you will observe me very satirical. Writing on such subjects I could not be otherwise. I can write nothing without aiming at least at usefulness. It were beneath my years to do it, and still more dishonourable to my religion. I know that a reformation of such abuses as I have censured is not to be expected from the efforts of a poet; but to contemplate the world, its follies, its vices, its indifference to duty, and its strenuous attachment to what is evil, and not to reprehend, were to approve it. From this charge at least I shall be clear, for I have neither tacitly nor expressly flattered either its characters, or its customs. I have paid one, and only one compliment, which was so justly due, that I did not know how to withhold it,

* Having enjoyed, in the year 1772, the pleasure of conversing with the illustrious seaman, on board his own ship, the Resolution. I can not pass the present letter without observing, that I am persuaded my friend Cowper utterly misapprehended the behaviour of Captain Cook, in the affair alluded to. From the little personal acquaintance, which I had myself with this humane and truly Christian navigator, and from the whole tenor of his life, I can not believe it possible for him to have acted, under any circumstances, with such impious arrogance, as might appear offensive in the eyes of the Almighty. *Haley.*

especially having so fair an occasion (I forget myself, there is another in the first book to Mr. Throckmorton,) but the compliment I mean is to Mr. ————. It is however so managed, that nobody but himself can make the application, and you, to whom I disclose the secret; a delicacy on my part, which so much delicacy on his obliged me to the observance of!

What there is of a religious cast in the volume I have thrown towards the end of it, for two reasons—first that I might not revolt the reader at his entrance—and secondly, that my best impressions might be made last. Were I to write as many volumes as Lopez de Vega, or Voltaire, not one of them would be without this tincture. If the world like it not, so much the worse for them. I make all the concessions I can, that I may please them, but I will not please them at the expense of my conscience.

My descriptions are all from nature. Not one of them second-handed. My delineations of the heart are from my own experience. Not one of them borrowed from books, or in the least degree conjectural. In my numbers, which I have varied as much as I could (for blank verse without variety of numbers is no better than bladder and string) I have imitated nobody, though sometimes, perhaps, there may be an apparant resemblance; because at the same time that I would not imitate, I have not effectually differed.

If the work can not boast a regular plan (in which respect however I do not think it altogether indefensible) it may yet boast, that the reflections are naturally suggested always by the preceding passage, and that except the fifth book, which is rather of a political aspect, the whole has one tendency; to discountenance the modern enthusiasm after a London life, and to recommend rural ease and leisure, as friendly to the cause of piety and virtue.

If it pleases you I shall be happy, and collect from your pleasure in it an omen of its general acceptance. Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR WILLIAM, *Oct.* 20, 1784.

Your letter has relieved me from some anxiety, and given me a good deal of positive pleasure. I have faith in your judgment, and an implicit confidence in the sincerity of your approbation. The writing of so long a poem is a serious business; and the author must know little of his own heart, who does not in some degree, suspect himself of partiality to his own production; and who is he that would not be mortified by the discovery, that he had written five thousand lines in vain? The poem however which you have in hand, will not of itself make a volume so large as the last, or as a bookseller would wish. I say this, because when I had sent Johnson five thousand verses, he applied for a thousand more. Two years since, I began a piece which grew to the length of two hundred, and there stopped. I have lately resumed it, and (I believe) shall finish it. But the subject is fruitful, and will not be comprised in a smaller compass than seven or eight hundred verses. It turns on the question, whether an education at school or at home be preferable, and I shall give the preference to the latter. I mean that it shall pursue the track of the former. That is to say, that it shall visit Stock in its way to publication. My design also is to inscribe it to you. But you must see it first; and if, after having seen it, you should have any objection, though it should be no bigger than the tittle of an *i*, I will deny myself that pleasure, and find no fault with your refusal. I have not been without thoughts of adding John Gilpin at the tail of all. He has made a good deal of noise in the world, and perhaps it may not be amiss to show, that though I write generally with a serious intention, I know how to be occasionally merry. The Critical Reviewers charged me with an attempt at humour. John having been more celebrated upon the score of humour than most pieces that have appeared in modern days, may serve to exonerate me from the imputation: but in this article I am entirely under your judgment, and mean to be set down by it. All these together will make an octavo volume like the last. I should have told you, that the piece which now employs me, is in rhyme. I do not intend to write any more blank. It is more difficult than rhyme, and not so amusing in the composition. If, when you make the offer of my book to Johnson, he should stroke his chin, and look up to the ceiling and cry—'Humph!'—anticipate him (I beseech you) at once, by saying,—'that you know I should be sorry that he should undertake for me to his own disadvantage, or that my volume should be in any degree pressed upon him. I make him the offer merely because I think he would have reason to complain of me, if I did not.' But that punctilio once satisfied, it is a matter of indifference to me what publisher sends me forth. If Longman should have difficulties, which is the more probable, as I understand from you that he does not in these cases see with his own eyes, but will consult a brother poet, take no pains to conquer them. The idea of being hawked about, and especially of your being the hawker, is insupportable. Nichols (I have heard) is the most learned printer of the present day. He may be a man of taste as well as learning; and I suppose that you would not want a gentleman usher to introduce you. He prints the Gentleman's Magazine, and may serve us, if the others should decline; if not, give yourself no

farther trouble about the matter. I may possibly envy authors, who can afford to publish at their own expense, and in that case should write no more. But the mortification would not break my heart.

I proceed to your corrections, for which I most unaffectedly thank you, adverting to them in their order.

Page 140.—Truth generally, without the article *the*, would not be sufficiently defined. There are many sorts of truth, philosophical, mathematical, moral, &c.; and a reader not much accustomed to hear of religious or scriptural truth, might possibly, and indeed easily doubt what truth was particularly intended. I acknowledge that *grace*, in my use of the word, does not often occur in poetry. So neither does the subject which I handle. Every subject has its own terms, and religious ones take theirs with most propriety from the scripture. Thence I take the word *grace*. The sarcastic use of it in the mouths of infidels I admit, but not their authority to proscribe it, especially as God's favour in the abstract has no other word, in all our language, by which it can be expressed.

Page 150.—*Impress the mind faintly, or not at all.*—I prefer this line, because of the interrupted run of it, having always observed that a little unevenness of this sort, in a long work, has a good effect, used, I mean sparingly, and with discretion.

Page 127.—This should have been noted first, but was overlooked. Be pleased to alter for me thus, with the difference of only one word from the alteration proposed by you—

> We too are friends to royalty. We love
> The king who loves the law, respects his bounds,
> And reigns content within them.

You observed probably, in your second reading, that I allow the life of an animal to be fairly taken away, when it interferes either with the interest or convenience of man. Consequently snails, and all reptiles that spoil our crops, either of fruit or grain, may be destroyed, if we can catch them. It gives me real pleasure, that Mrs. Unwin so readily understood me. Blank verse, by the unusual arrangement of the words, and by the frequent infusion of one line into another, not less than by the style, which requires a kind of tragical magnificence, can not be chargeable with much obscurity, must rather be singularly perspicuous, to be so easily comprehended. It is my labour, and my principal one, to be as clear as possible. You do not mistake me, when you suppose that I have great respect for the virtue that flies temptation. It is that sort of prowess which the whole train of scripture calls us to manifest, when assailed by sensual evil. Interior mischiefs must be grappled with. There is no flight from them. But solicitations to sin, that address themselves to our bodily senses, are, I believe, seldom conquered in any other way.

I can easily see that you may have very reasonable objections to my dedicatory proposal. You are a clergyman, and I have banged your order. You are a child of *alma mater*, and I have banged her too. Lay yourself therefore under no constraints that I do not lay you under, but consider yourself as perfectly free.

With our best love to you all, I bid you heartily farewell. I am tired of this endless scribblement. Adieu! Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON

My dear friend, *Oct.* 30, 1784.

I accede most readily to the justness of your remark on the subject of the truly Roman heroism of the Sandwich islanders. Proofs of such prowess I believe are seldom exhibited by a people who have attained to a high degree of civilization. Refinement and profligacy of principle are too nearly allied, to admit of any thing so noble; and I question whether any instances of faithful friendship, like that which so much affected you in the behaviour of the poor savage, were produced even by the Romans themselves, in the latter days of the empire. They had been a nation whose virtues it is impossible not to wonder at. But Greece, which was to them what France is to us, a Pandora's box of mischief, reduced them to her own standard, and they naturally soon sunk still lower. Religion in this case seems pretty much out of the question. To the production of such heroism, undebauched nature herself is equal. When Italy was a land of heroes, she knew no more of the true God than her cicisbèos and her fiddlers know now; and indeed it seems a matter of indifference, whether a man be born under a truth which does not influence him, or under the actual influence of a lie; or if there be any difference between the two cases, it seems to be rather in favour of the latter: for a false persuasion, such as the Mahometan for instance, may animate the courage, and furnish motives for the contempt of death, while despisers of the true religion are punished for their folly by being abandoned to the last degrees of depravity. Accordingly we see a Sandwich islander sacrificing himself to his dead friend, and our Christian seamen and mariners, instead of being impressed by a sense of his generosity, butchering him with a persevering cruelty that will disgrace them for ever: for he was a defenceless, unresisting enemy, who meant nothing more than to gratify his love for the deceased. To slay him in such circumstances was to murder him, and with every aggravation of the crime that can be imagined.

I am again at Johnson's in the shape of a poem in blank verse, consisting of six books, and called The Task. I began it about this time twelvemonth, and writing sometimes an hour in the day, sometimes half a one, and sometimes two hours, have lately finished it. I mentioned it not sooner, because almost to the last I was doubtful whether I should ever bring it to a conclusion, working often in such distress of mind, as, while it spurred me to the work, at the same time threatened to disqualify me for it. My bookseller I suppose will be as tardy as before. I do not expect to be born into the world till the month of March, when I and the crocuses shall peep together. You may assure yourself that I shall take my first opportunity to wait on you. I mean likewise to gratify myself by obtruding my muse upon Mr. Bacon.

Adieu, my dear friend! we are well, and love you. Yours and Mrs. Newton's, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND *Nov.* 1, 1784.

Were I to delay my answer, I must yet write without a frank at last, and may as well therefore write without one now, especially feeling, as I do, a desire to thank you for your friendly offices so well performed. I am glad for your sake, as well as for my own, that you succeeded in the first instance, and that the first trouble proved the last. I am willing too to consider Johnson's readiness to accept a second volume of mine, as an argument that at least he was no loser by the former. I collect from it some reasonable hope that the volume in question may not wrong him neither. My imagination tells me (for I know you interest yourself in the success of my productions) that your heart fluttered when you approached Johnson's door, and that it felt itself discharged of a burthen when you came out again. You did well to mention it at the T———s; they will now know that you do not pretend a share in my confidence, whatever be the value of it, greater than you actually possess. I wrote to Mr. Newton by the last post, to tell him that I was gone to the press again. He will be surprised and perhaps not pleased. But I think he can not complain, for he keeps his own authorly secrets without participating them with me. I do not think myself in the least injured by his reserve; neither should I, if he were to publish a whole library without favouring me with any previous notice of his intentions. In these cases it is no violation of the laws of friendship not to communicate, though there must be a friendship where the communication is made. But many reasons may concur in disposing a writer to keep his work secret, and none of them injurious to his friends. The influence of one I have felt myself, for which none of them would blame me—I mean the desire of surprising agreeably. And if I have denied myself this pleasure in your instance, it was only to give myself a greater, by eradicating from your mind any little weeds of suspicion, that might still remain in it, that any man living is nearer to me than yourself. Had not this consideration forced up the lid of my strong box like a lever, it would have kept its contents with an invisible closeness to the last; and the first news that either you or any of my friends would have heard of the Task, they would have received from the public papers. But you know now, that neither as a poet, nor a man, do I give to any man a precedence in my estimation at your expense.

I am proceeding with my new work (which at present I feel myself much inclined to call by the name of Tirocinium) as fast as the muse permits. It has reached the length of seven hundred lines, and will probably receive an addition of two or three hundred more. When you see Mr. ——— perhaps you will not find it difficult to procure from him half a dozen franks, addressed to yourself, and dated the fifteenth of December, in which case, they will all go to the post filled with my lucubrations, on the evening of that day. I do not name an earlier, because I hate to be hurried; and Johnson can not want it sooner than, thus managed, it will reach him.

I am not sorry that John Gilpin, though hitherto he has been nobody's child, is likely to be owned at last. Here and there I can give him a touch that I think will mend him, the language in some places not being quite so quaint and old-fashioned as it should be; and in one of the stanzas there is a false rhyme. When I have thus given the finishing stroke to his figure, I mean to grace him with two mottos, a Greek and a Latin one, which, when the world shall see that I have only a little one of three words to the volume itself, and none to the books of which it consists, they will perhaps understand as a stricture upon that pompous display of literature, with which some authors take occasion to crowd their titles. Knox, in particular, who is a sensible man too, has not, I think, fewer than half a dozen to his Essays.

Adieu, W. C.

[TO THE REV. WILLIAM BULL.]

November 8, 1784.

The Task, as you know, is gone to the press: since it went I have been employed in writing another poem, which I am now transcribing, and which in a short time I design shall follow. It is entitled, Tirocinium, or a Review of Schools: the business and purpose of it are, to censure the want

of discipline, and the scandalous inattention to morals, that obtain in them, especially in the largest; and to recommend private tuition as a mode of education preferable on all accounts; to call upon fathers to become tutors of their own sons, where that is practicable; to take home a domestic tutor, where it is not; and if neither can be done, to place them under the care of such a man, as he to whom I am writing, some rural parson, whose attention is limited to a few.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *November*, 1784.

To condole with you on the death of a mother aged eighty-seven would be absurd—rather, therefore, as is reasonable, I congratulate you on the almost singular felicity of having enjoyed the company of so amiable and so near a relation so long. Your lot and mine in this respect have been very different, as indeed in almost every other. Your mother lived to see you rise, at least to see you comfortably established in the world. Mine, dying when I was six years old, did not live to see me sink in it. You may remember with pleasure, while you live, a blessing vouchsafed to you so long; and I, while I live, must regret a comfort of which I was deprived so early. I can truly say, that not a week passes (perhaps I might with equal veracity say a day) in which I do not think of her. Such was the impression her tenderness made upon me, though the opportunity she had for showing it was so short. But the ways of God are equal—and when I reflect on the pangs she would have suffered, had she been a witness of all mine, I see more cause to rejoice, than to mourn, that she was hidden in the grave so soon.

We have, as you say, lost a lively and sensible neighbour in Lady Austen, but we have been long accustomed to a state of retirement within one degree of solitude, and being naturally lovers of still life, can relapse into our former duality without being unhappy at the change. To me indeed a third is not necessary, while I can have the companion I have had these twenty years.

I am gone to the press again; a volume of mine will greet your hands some time either in the course of the winter, or early in the spring. You will find it perhaps on the whole more entertaining than the former, as it treats a great variety of subjects, and those, at least the most, of a sublunary kind. It will consist of a poem in six books, called the Task. To which will be added another, which I finished yesterday, called, I believe, Tirocinium, on the subject of education.

You perceive that I have taken your advice, and given the pen no rest.* W. C.

* On the 21st of this month the writer commenced his translation of Homer.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Nov.* 27, 1784.

All the interest that you take in my new publication, and all the pleas that you urge in behalf of your right to my confidence, the moment I had read your letter, struck me as so many proofs of your regard; of a friendship, in which distance and time make no abatement. But it is difficult to adjust opposite claims to the satisfaction of all parties. I have done my best, and must leave it to your candour to put a just interpretation upon all that has passed, and to give me credit for it, as a certain truth, that whatever seeming defects, in point of attention and attachment to you, my conduct on this occasion may have appeared to have been chargeable with, I am in reality as clear of all real ones, as you would wish to find me.

I send you enclosed, in the first place, a copy of the advertisement to the reader, which accounts for my title, not otherwise easily accounted for—secondly, what is called an argument, or a summary of the contents of each book, more circumstantial and diffuse by far than that which I have sent to the press. It will give you a pretty accurate acquaintance with my matter, though the tenons and mortises, by which the several passages are connected, and let into each other, can not be explained in a syllabus—and lastly, an extract as you desired. The subject of it I am sure will please you, and as I have admitted into my description no images but what are scriptural, and have aimed as exactly as I could at the plain and simple sublimity of the scripture language, I have hopes the manner of it may please you too. As far as the numbers and diction are concerned, it may serve pretty well for a sample of the whole. But the subjects being so various, no single passage can in all respects be a specimen of a book at large.

My principal purpose is to allure the reader, by character, by scenery, by imagery, and such poetical embellishments, to the reading of what may profit him. Subordinately to this, to combat that predeliction in favour of a metropolis, that beggars and exhausts the country, by evacuating it of all its principal inhabitants: and collaterally, and as far as is consistent with this double intention, to have a stroke at vice, vanity, and folly, wherever I find them. I have not spared the universities. A letter which appeared in the General Evening Post of Saturday, said to have been received by a general officer, and by him sent to the press, as worthy of public notice, and which has all the appearance of authenticity, would alone justify the severest censure of those bodies, if any such justification were wanted. By way of supplement to what I have written on this subject, I have added a poem, called Tirocinium, which is in rhyme. It treats of the scandalous relaxation of that disci-

pline that obtains in almost all schools universally, but especially in the largest, which are so negligent in the article of morals, that boys are debauched in general the moment they are capable of being so. It recommends the office of tutor to the father, where there is no real impediment; the expedient of a domestic tutor, where there is; and the disposal of boys into the hands of a respectable country clergyman, who limits his attention to two, in all cases where they can not be conveniently educated at home. Mr. Unwin happily affording me an instance in point, the poem is inscribed to him. You will now I hope command your hunger to be patient, and be satisfied with the luncheon that I send, till dinner comes. That piecemeal perusal of the work, sheet by sheet, would be so disadvantageous to the work itself, and therefore so uncomfortable to me, that (I dare say) you will wave your desire of it. A poem, thus disjointed, can not possibly be fit for any body's inspection but the author's.

Tully's rule—'*Nulla dies sine lineâ*'—will make a volume in less time than one would suppose. I adhered to it so rigidly, that though more than once I found three lines as many as I had time to compass, still I wrote; and finding occasionally, and as it might happen, a more fluent vein, the abundance of one day made me amends for the barrenness of the other. But I do not mean to write blank verse again. Not having the music of rhyme, it requires so close an attention to the pause, and the cadence, and such a peculiar mode of expression, as to render it, to me at least, the most difficult species of poetry that I have ever meddled with.

I am obliged to you, and to Mr. Bacon, for your kind remembrance of me when you meet. No artist can excel as he does, without the finest feelings; and every man that has the finest feelings is, and must be, amiable. Adieu, my dear friend!

Affectionately yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR WILLIAM, 1784.

The slice which (you observe) has been taken from the top of the sheet, it lost before I began to write: but being a part of the paper which is seldom used, I thought it would be pity to discard or to degrade to meaner purposes, the fair and ample remnant, on account of so immaterial a defect. I therefore have destined it to be the vehicle of a letter, which you will accept as entire, though a lawyer perhaps would, without much difficulty, prove it to be but a fragment. The best recompense I can make you for writing without a frank is, to propose it to you to take your revenge by returning an answer under the same predicament; and the best reason I can give for doing it is the occasion following. In my last I recommended it to you to procure franks for the conveyance of Tirocinium, dated on a day therein mentioned, and the earliest which at that time I could venture to appoint. It has happened however that the poem is finished a month sooner than I expected, and two-thirds of it are at this time fairly transcribed; an accident to which the riders of a Parnassian steed are liable, who never know, before they mount him, at what rate he will choose to travel. If he be indisposed to despatch, it is impossible to accelerate his pace; if otherwise, equally impossible to stop him. Therefore my errand to you at this time is to cancel the former assignation, and to inform you that by whatever means you please, and as soon as you please, the piece in question will be ready to attend you; for without exerting any extraordinary diligence, I shall have completed the transcript in a week.

The critics will never know that four lines of it were composed while I had a dose of ipecacuanha on my stomach; in short, that I was delivered of the emetic and the verses in the same moment. Knew they this, they would at least allow me to be a poet of singular industry, and confess that I lose no time. I have heard of poets who have found cathartics of sovereign use, when they had occasion to be particularly brilliant. Dryden always used them, and in commemoration of it, Bayes in the Rehearsal is made to inform the audience that in a poetical emergency he always had recourse to stewed prunes. But I am the only poet who has dared to reverse the prescription, and whose enterprise, having succeeded to admiration, warrants him to recommend an emetic to all future bards, as the most infallible means of producing a fluent and easy versification.

My love to all your family.

Adieu, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Nov.* 29, 1784.

I am happy that you are pleased, and accept it as an earnest that I shall not at least disgust the public. For though I know your partiality to me, I know at the same time with what laudable tenderness you feel for your own reputation, and that for the sake of that most delicate part of your property, though you would not criticise me with an unfriendly and undue severity, you would however beware of being satisfied too hastily, and with no warrantable cause of being so. I called you the tutor of your two sons, in contemplation of the certainty of that event—it is a fact in suspense, not in fiction.

My principal errand to you now is to give you information on the following subject: The moment

Mr. Newton knew (and I took care that he should learn it first from me) that I had communicated to you what I had concealed from him, and that you were my authorship's go-between with Johnson on this occasion, he sent me a most friendly letter indeed, but one in every line of which I could hear the soft murmur of something like mortification, that could not be entirely suppressed. It contained nothing however that you yourself would have blamed, or that I had not every reason to consider as evidence of his regard to me. He concluded the subject with desiring to know something of my plan, to be favoured with an extract, by way of specimen, or (which he should like better still) with wishing me to order Johnson to send him a proof as fast as they were printed off. Determining not to accede to this last request for many reasons (but especially because I would no more show my poem piecemeal, than I would my house if I had one; the merits of the structure, in either case, being equally liable to suffer by such a partial view of it), I have endeavoured to compromise the difference between us, and to satisfy him without disgracing myself. The proof sheets I have absolutely though civilly refused. But I have sent him a copy of the arguments of each book, more dilated and circumstantial than those inserted in the work; and to these I have added an extract as he desired; selecting, as most suited to his taste—The view of the restoration of all things—which you recollect to have seen near the end of the last book. I hold it necessary to tell you this, lest, if you should call upon him, he should startle you by discovering a degree of information upon the subject, which you could not otherwise know how to reconcile, or to account for.

You have executed your commissions *à merveille*. We not only approve, but admire. No apology was wanting for the balance struck at the bottom, which we accounted rather a beauty than a deformity. Pardon a poor poet, who can not speak even of pounds, shillings, and pence, but in his own way.

I have read Lunardi with pleasure. He is a lively, sensible young fellow, and I suppose a very favourable sample of the Italians. When I look at his picture, I can fancy that I see in him that good sense and courage that no doubt were legible in the face of a young Roman, two thousand years ago.

Your affectionate W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Dec.* 13, 1784.

Having imitated no man, I may reasonably hope that I shall not incur the disadvantage of a comparison with my betters. Milton's manner was peculiar. So is Thomson's. He that should write like either of them, would in my judgment deserve the name of a copyist, but not a poet. A judicious and sensible reader therefore, like yourself, will not say that my manner is not good, because it does not resemble theirs, but will rather consider what it is in itself. Blank verse is susceptible of a much greater diversification of manner, than verse in rhyme: and why the modern writers of it have all thought proper to cast their numbers alike, I know not. Certainly it was not necessity that compelled them to it. I flatter myself however that I have avoided that sameness with others which would entitle me to nothing but a share in one common oblivion with them all. It is possible that, as a reviewer of my former volume found cause to say that he knew not to what class of writers to refer me, the reviewer of this, whoever he shall be, may see occasion to remark the same singularity. At any rate, though as little apt to be sanguine as most men, and more prone to fear and despond, than to overrate my own productions, I am persuaded that I shall not forfeit any thing by this volume that I gained by the last. As to the title, I take it to be the best that is to be had. It is not possible that a book, including such a variety of subjects, and in which no particular one is predominant, should find a title adapted to them all. In such a case, it seemed almost necessary to accommodate the name to the incident that gave birth to the poem; nor does it appear to me, that because I performed more than my task, therefore the Task is not a suitable title. A house would still be a house, though the builder of it should make it ten times as big as he at first intended. I might indeed, following the example of the Sunday newsmonger, call it the Olio. But I should do myself wrong: for though it have much variety, it has I trust no confusion.

For the same reason none of the interior titles apply themselves to the contents at large of that book to which they belong. They are, every one of them, taken either from the leading (I should say the introductory) passage of that particular book, or from that which makes the most conspicuous figure in it. Had I set off with a design to write upon a gridiron, and had I actually written near two hundred lines upon that utensil, as I have upon the Sofa, the gridiron should have been my title. But the Sofa being, as I may say, the starting post from which I addressed myself to the long race that I soon conceived a design to run, it acquired a just pre-eminence in my account, and was very worthily advanced to the titular honours it enjoys, its right being at least so far a good one, that no word in the language could pretend a better.

The Time-piece appears to me (though by some accident the import of the title has escaped

you) to have a degree of propriety beyond most of them. The book to which it belongs is intended to strike the hour that gives notice of approaching judgment, and dealing pretty largely in the signs of the times, seems to be denominated, as it is, with a sufficient degree of accommodation to the subject.

As to the word *worm*, it is the very appellation which Milton himself, in a certain passage of the Paradise Lost, gives to the serpent. Not having the book at hand, I can not now refer to it, but I am sure of the fact. I am mistaken, too, if Shakspeare's Cleopatra do not call the asp, by which she thought fit to destroy herself, by the same name. But not having read the play these five-and-twenty years, I will not affirm it. They are, however, without all doubt convertible terms. A worm is a small serpent, and a serpent is a large worm. And when an epithet significant of the most terrible species of those creatures is adjoined, the idea is surely sufficiently ascertained. No animal of the vermicular or serpentine kind is crested, but the most formidable of all.

Yours affectionately, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Dec.* 18, 1784.

I condole with you, that you had the trouble to ascend St. Paul's in vain, but at the same time congratulate you, that you escaped an ague. I should be very well pleased to have a fair prospect of a balloon under sail, with a philosopher or two on board, but at the same time should be very sorry to expose myself, for any length of time, to the rigour of the upper regions, at this season, for the sake of it. The travellers themselves I suppose are secured from all injuries of the weather by that fervency of spirit and agitation of mind, which must needs accompany them in their flight; advantages which the more composed and phlegmatic spectator is not equally possessed of.

The inscription of the poem is more your own affair than any other person's. You have, therefore, an undoubted right to fashion it to your mind, nor have I the least objection to the slight alteration that you have made in it. I inserted what you have erased for a reason that was perhaps rather chimerical than solid. I feared, however, that the Reviewers, or some of my sagacious readers, not more merciful than they, might suspect that there was a secret design in the wind; and that author and friend had consulted in what manner author might introduce friend to public notice, as a clergyman every way qualified to entertain a pupil or two, if peradventure any gentleman of fortune were in want of a tutor for his children. I therefore added the words—"And of his two sons only"—by way of insinuating, that you are perfectly satisfied with your present charge, and that you do not wish for more; thus meaning to obviate an illiberal construction, which we are both of us incapable of deserving. But the same caution not having appeared to you to be necessary, I am very willing and ready to suppose that it is not so.

I intended in my last to have given you my reasons for the compliment I have paid Bishop Bagot, lest, knowing that I have no connexion with him, you should suspect me of having done it rather too much at a venture. In the first place then, I wished the world to know that I have no objection to a bishop, *quiâ* bishop. In the second place, the brothers were all five my schoolfellows, and very amiable and valuable boys they were. Thirdly, Lewis, the bishop, had been rudely and coarsely treated in the Monthly Review, on account of a sermon, which appeared to me, when I read their extract from it, to deserve the highest commendations, as exhibiting explicit proof both of his good sense, and his unfeigned piety. For these causes me thereunto moving, I felt myself happy in an opportunity to do public honour to a worthy man, who had been publicly traduced; and indeed the Reviewers themselves have since repented of their aspersions, and have traveled not a little out of their way in order to retract them, having taken occasion by the sermon preached at the bishop's visitation at Norwich, to say every thing handsome of his lordship, who, whatever might be the merit of the discourse, in that instance at least could himself lay claim to no other than that of being a hearer.

Since I wrote, I have had a letter from Mr. Newton, that did not please me, and returned an answer to it, that possibly may not have pleased him. We shall come together again soon (I suppose) upon as amicable terms as usual. But at present he is in a state of mortification. He would have been pleased, had the book passed out of his hand into yours, or even out of yours into his, so that he had previously had opportunity to advise a measure which I pursued without his recommendation, and had seen the poems in manuscript. But my design was to pay you a whole compliment, and I have done it. If he says more on the subject, I shall speak freely, and perhaps please him less than I have done already.

Yours, with our love to all, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Christmas Eve*, 1784.

I am neither Mede nor Persian, neither am I the son of any such, but was born at Great Berkhamsted, in Hertfordshire, and yet I can neither

find a new title for my book, nor please myself with any addition to the old one. I am however willing to hope that, when the volume shall cast itself at your feet, you will be in some measure reconciled to the name it bears, especially when you shall find it justified both by the exordium of the poem, and by the conclusion. But enough, as you say with great truth, of a subject very unworthy of so much consideration.

Had I heard any anecdotes of poor dying —— that would have bid fair to deserve your attention, I should have sent them. The little that he is reported to have uttered of a spiritual import, was not very striking. That little however I can give you upon good authority. His brother asking him how he found himself, he replied, "I am very composed, and think that I may safely believe myself entitled to a portion." The world has had much to say in his praise, and both prose and verse have been employed to celebrate him in the Northampton Mercury. But Christians (I suppose) have judged it best to be silent. If he ever drank of the fountain of life, he certainly drank also, and often too freely, of certain other streams, which are not to be bought without money and without price. He had virtues that dazzled the natural eye, and failings that shocked the spiritual one. But *iste dies indicabit.* W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR WILLIAM, *Olney, Jan.* 15, 1785.

Your letters are always welcome. You can always either find something to say, or can amuse me and yourself with a sociable and friendly way of saying nothing. I never found that a letter was the more easily written, because the writing of it had been long delayed. On the contrary, experience has taught me to answer soon, that I may do it without difficulty. It is in vain to wait for an accumulation of materials in a situation such as yours and mine, productive of few events. At the end of our expectations we shall find ourselves as poor as at the beginning.

I can hardly tell you with any certainty of information, upon what terms Mr. Newton and I may be supposed to stand at present. A month (I believe) has passed, since I heard from him. But my *friseur*, having been in London in the course of this week, whence he returned last night, and having called at Hoxton, brought me his love, and an excuse for his silence, which (he said) had been occasioned by the frequency of his preachings at this season. He was not pleased that my manuscript was not first transmitted to him, and I have cause to suspect that he was even mortified at being informed, that a certain inscribed poem was not inscribed to himself. But we shall jumble together again, as people that have an affection for each other at bottom, notwithstanding now and then a slight disagreement, always do.

I know not whether Mr. —— has acted in consequence of your hint, or whether, not needing one, he transmitted to us his bounty, before he had received it. He has however sent us a note for twenty pounds; with which we have performed wonders, in behalf of the ragged and the starved. He is a most extraordinary young man, and, though I shall probably never see him, will always have a niche in the museum of my reverential remembrance.

The death of Dr. Johnson has set a thousand scribblers to work, and me among the rest. While I lay in bed, waiting till I could reasonably hope that the parlour might be ready for me, I invoked the muse, and composed the following Epitaph.*

It is destined (I believe) to the Gentleman's Magazine, which I consider as a respectable repository for small matters, which, when intrusted to a newspaper, can expect but the duration of a day. But Nichols having at present a small piece of mine in his hands, not yet printed, (it is called the Poplar Field, and I suppose you have it) I wait till his obstetrical aid has brought that to light, before I send him a new one. In his last he published my epitaph upon Tiney; which (I likewise imagine) has been long in your collection.

Not a word yet from Johnson. I am easy however upon the subject, being assured that so long as his own interest is at stake, he will not want a monitor to remind him of the proper time to publish.

You and your family have our sincere love. Forget not to present my respectful compliments to Miss Unwin, and, if you have not done it already, thank her on my part for the very agreeable narrative of Lunardi. He is a young man (I presume) of great good sense and spirit, (his letters at least, and his enterprising turn, bespeak him such) a man qualified to shine not only among the stars, but in the more useful, though humbler sphere of terrestrial occupation.

I have been crossing the channel in a balloon, ever since I read of that achievement by Blanchard. I have an insatiable thirst to know the philosophical reason, why his vehicle had like to have fallen into the sea, when for aught that appears the gas was not at all exhausted. Did not the extreme cold condense the inflammable air, and cause the globe to collapse? Tell me, and be my Apollo for ever!

Affectionately yours, W. C.

* See Cowper's Poems.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Feb.* 7, 1785.

We live in a state of such uninterrupted retirement, in which incidents worthy to be recorded occur so seldom, that I always sit down to write with a discouraging conviction that I have nothing to say. The event commonly justifies the presage. For when I have filled my sheet, I find that I have said nothing. Be it known to you, however, that I may now at least communicate a piece of intelligence to which you will not be altogether indifferent, that I have received, and returned to Johnson, the two first proof sheets of my new publication. The business was despatched indeed a fortnight ago, since when I have heard from him no further. From such a beginning however I venture to prognosticate the progress, and in due time the conclusion, of the matter.

In the last Gentleman's Magazine my Poplar Field appears. I have accordingly sent up two pieces more, a Latin translation of it, which you have never seen, and another on a Rose-bud, the neck of which I inadvertently broke, which, whether you have seen or not, I know not. As fast as Nichols prints off the poems I send him, I send him new ones. My remittance usually consists of two; and he publishes one of them at a time. I may indeed furnish him at this rate, without putting myself to any great inconvenience. For my last supply was transmitted to him in August, and is but now exhausted.

I communicate the following anecdote at your mother's instance, who will suffer no part of my praise to be sunk in oblivion. A certain Lord has hired a house at Clifton, in our neighbourhood, for a hunting seat. There he lives at present with his wife and daughter. They are an exemplary family in some respects, and (I believe) an amiable one in all. The Reverend Mr. Jones, the curate of that parish, who often dines with them by invitation on a Sunday, recommended my volume to their reading; and his Lordship, after having perused a part of it, expressed to the said Mr. Jones an ardent desire to be acquainted with the author, from motives which my great modesty will not suffer me to particularize. Mr. Jones, however, like a wise man, informed his Lordship, that for certain special reasons and causes I had declined going into company for many years, and that therefore he must not hope for my acquaintance. His Lordship most civilly subjoined, that he was sorry for it. "And is that all?" say you. Now were I to hear you say so, I should look foolish and say—"Yes."—But having you at a distance, I snap my fingers at you, and say,—"No, that is not all."—Mr. ———, who favours us now and then with his company in an evening, as usual, was not long since discoursing with that eloquence which is so peculiar to himself, on the many providential interpositions that had taken place in his favour. "He had wished for many things (he said) which, at the time when he formed those wishes, seemed distant and improbable, some of them indeed impossible. Among other wishes that he had indulged, one was, that he might be connected with men of genius and ability—and in my connexion with this worthy gentleman (said he, turning to me,) that wish, I am sure, is amply gratified." You may suppose that I felt the sweat gush out upon my forehead, when I heard this speech; and if you do, you will not be at all mistaken. So much was I delighted with the delicacy of that incense.

Thus far I proceeded easily enough; and here I laid down my pen, and spent some minutes in recollection, endeavouring to find some subject, with which I might fill the little blank that remains. But none presents itself. Farewell, therefore, and remember those who are mindful of you!

Present our love to all your comfortable fireside, and believe me ever most affectionately yours,

W. C.

They that read Greek with the accents would pronounce the ε in Φιλέω as an η. But I do not hold with that practice, though educated in it. I should therefore utter it just as I do the Latin word *filio*, taking the quantity for my guide.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR WILLIAM, *March* 20, 1785.

I thank you for your letter. It made me laugh, and there are not many things capable of being contained within the dimensions of a letter, for which I see cause to be more thankful. I was pleased too to see my opinion of his Lordship's *nonchalance* upon a subject that you had so much at heart, completely verified. I do not know that the eye of a nobleman was ever dissected. I can not help supposing however that, were that organ, as it exists in the head of such a personage, to be accurately examined, it would be found to differ materially in its construction from the eye of a commoner; so very different is the view that men in an elevated, and in an humble station, have of the same object. What appears great, sublime, beautiful, and important, to you and to me, when submitted to the notice of my lord, or his grace, and submitted too with the utmost humility, is either too minute to be visible at all, or if seen, seems trivial, and of no account. My supposition therefore seems not altogether chimerical.

In two months I have corrected proof sheets to the amount of ninety-three pages, and no more.

In other words, I have received three packets. Nothing is quick enough for impatience, and I suppose that the impatience of an author has the quickest of all possible movements. It appears to me, however, that at this rate we shall not publish till next autumn. Should you happen therefore to pass Johnson's door, pop in your head as you go, and just insinuate to him, that, were his remittances rather more frequent, that frequency would be no inconvenience to me. I much expected one this evening, a fortnight having now elapsed since the arrival of the last. But none came, and I felt myself a little mortified. I took up the newspaper, however, and read it. There I found that the emperor and the Dutch are, after all their negotiations, going to war. Such reflections as these struck me. A great part of Europe is going to be involved in the greatest of all calamities—troops are in motion—artillery is drawn together—cabinets are busied in contriving schemes of blood and devastation—thousands will perish, who are incapable of understanding the dispute; and thousands, who, whatever the event may be, are little more interested in it than myself, will suffer unspeakable hardships in the course of the quarrel—Well! Mr. Poet, and how then? You have composed certain verses, which you are desirous to see in print, and because the impression seems to be delayed, you are displeased, not to say dispirited—be ashamed of yourself! you live in a world in which your feelings may find worthier subjects—be concerned for the havoc of nations, and mourn over your retarded volume when you find a dearth of more important tragedies!

You postpone certain topics of conference to our next meeting. When shall it take place? I do not wish for you just now, because the garden is a wilderness, and so is all the country around us. In May we shall have asparagus, and weather in which we may stroll to Weston; at least we may hope for it; therefore come in May; you will find us happy to receive you, and as much of your fair household as you can bring with you.

We are very sorry for your uncle's indisposition. The approach of summer seems however to be in his favour, that season being of all remedies for the rheumatism I believe the most effectual.

I thank you for your intelligence concerning the celebrity of John Gilpin. You may be sure that it was agreeable—but your own feelings on occasion of that article pleased me most of all. Well, my friend, be comforted! You had not an opportunity of saying publicly, "I know the author." But the author will say as much for you soon, and perhaps will feel in doing so a gratification equal to your own.

In the affair of face-painting, I am precisely of your opinion. Adieu, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *April* 30, 1785.

I RETURN you thanks for a letter so warm with the intelligence of the celebrity of John Gilpin. I little thought, when I mounted him upon my Pegasus, that he would become so famous. I have learned also, from Mr. Newton, that he is equally renowned in Scotland, and that a lady there had undertaken to write a second part, on the subject of Mrs. Gilpin's return to London, but not succeeding in it as she wished, she dropt it. He tells me likewise, that the head master of St. Paul's school (who he is I know not) has conceived, in consequence of the entertainment that John has afforded him, a vehement desire to write to me. Let us hope he will alter his mind; for should we even exchange civilities on the occasion, Tirocinium will spoil all. The great estimation however in which this knight of the stone-bottles is held, may turn out a circumstance propitious to the volume of which his history will make a part. Those events that prove the prelude to our greatest success, are often apparently trivial in themselves, and such as seemed to promise nothing. The disappointment that Horace mentioned is reversed—We design a mug and it proves a hogshead. It is a little hard that I alone should be unfurnished with a printed copy of this facetious story. When you visit London next, you must buy the most elegant impression of it, and bring it with you. I thank you also for writing to Johnson. I likewise wrote to him myself. Your letter and mine together have operated to admiration. There needs nothing more than that the effect be lasting, and the whole will be soon printed. We now draw towards the middle of the fifth book of the Task. The man, Johnson, is like unto some vicious horses, that I have known. They would not budge till they were spurred, and when they were spurred they would kick—So did he—His temper was somewhat disconcerted; but his pace was quickened, and I was contented.

I was very much pleased with the following sentence in Mr. Newton's last—"I am perfectly satisfied with the propriety of your proceeding as to the publication."—Now therefore we are friends again. Now he once more inquires after the work, which, till he had disburdened himself of this acknowledgment, neither he nor I, in any of our letters to each other, ever mentioned. Some side-wind has wafted to him a report of those reasons by which I justified my conduct. I never made a secret of them, but both your mother and I have studiously deposited them with those who we thought were most likely to transmit them to him They wanted only a hearing, which once obtained,

their solidity and cogency were such that they were sure to prevail.

You mention ———. I formerly knew the man you mention, but his elder brother much better. We were schoolfellows, and he was one of a club of seven Westminster men, to which I belonged, who dined together every Thursday. Should it please God to give me ability to perform the poet's part to some purpose, many whom I once called friends, but who have since treated me with a most magnificent indifference, will be ready to take me by the hand again, and some, whom I never held in that estimation, will, like ——, (who was but a boy when I left London) boast of a connexion with me which they never had. Had I the virtues, and graces, and accomplishments of St. Paul himself, I might have them at Olney, and nobody would care a button about me, yourself and one or two more excepted. Fame begets favour, and one talent, if it be rubbed a little bright by use and practice, will procure a man more friends than a thousand virtues. Dr. Johnson (I believe) in the life of one of our poets, says, that he retired from the world flattering himself that he should be regretted. But the world never missed him. I think his observation upon it is, that the vacancy made by the retreat of any individual is soon filled up; that a man may always be obscure, if he chooses to be so; and that he, who neglects the world, will be by the world neglected.

Your mother and I walked yesterday in the wilderness. As we entered the gate, a glimpse of something white, contained in a little hole in the gate-post, caught my eye. I looked again, and discovered a bird's nest, with two tiny eggs in it. By and by they will be fledged, and tailed, and get wing-feathers, and fly. My case is somewhat similar to that of the parent bird. My nest is a little nook. Here I brood and hatch, and in due time my progeny takes wing and whistles.

We wait for the time of your coming with pleasant expectation. Yours truly, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *June* 25, 1785.

I write in a nook that I call my *Boudoir*. It is a summer-house not much bigger than a sedan chair, the door of which opens into the garden, that is now crowded with pinks, roses, and honeysuckles, and the window into my neighbour's orchard. It formerly served an apothecary, now dead, as a smoking-room; and under my feet is a trap-door, which once covered a hole in the ground where he kept his bottles. At present however it is dedicated to sublimer uses. Having lined it with garden mats, and furnished it with a table and two chairs, here I write all that I write in the summer-time, whether to my friends, or to the public. It is secure from all noise, and a refuge from all intrusion; for intruders sometimes trouble me in the winter evenings at Olney. But (thanks to my *Boudoir!*) I can now hide myself from them. A poet's retreat is sacred. They acknowledge the truth of that proposition, and never presume to violate it.

The last sentence puts me in mind to tell you that I have ordered my volume to your door. My bookseller is the most dilatory of all his fraternity, or you would have received it long since. It is more than a month since I returned him the last proof, and consequently since the printing was finished. I sent him the manuscript at the beginning of last November, that he might publish while the town was full, and he will hit the exact moment when it is entirely empty. Patience (you will perceive) is in no situation exempted from the severest trials; a remark that may serve to comfort you under the numberless trials of your own.*

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR WILLIAM, *July* 27, 1785.

You and your party left me in a frame of mind that indisposed me much to company. I comforted myself with the hope that I should spend a silent day, in which I should find abundant leisure to indulge sensations which, though of the melancholy kind, I yet wished to nourish. But that hope proved vain. In less than an hour after your departure, Mr. —— made his appearance at the green-house door. We were obliged to ask him to dinner, and he dined with us. He is an agreeable, sensible, well-bred young man, but with all his recommendations, I felt that on that occasion I could have spared him. So much better are the absent, whom we love much, than the present whom we love a little. I have however made myself amends since, and nothing else having interfered, have sent many a thought after you.

You had been gone two days when a violent thunder-storm came over us. I was passing out of the parlour into the hall, with Mungo at my heels, when a flash seemed to fill the room with fire. In the same instant came the clap, so that the explosion was (I suppose) perpendicular to the roof. Mungo's courage upon the tremendous occasion constrained me to smile, in spite of the solemn impression that such an event never fails to affect me with—the moment that he heard the thunder (which was like the burst of a great gun),

* In this interval The Task was published.

with a wrinkled forehead, and with eyes directed to the ceiling, whence the sound seemed to proceed, he barked; but he barked exactly in concert with the thunder. It thundered once, and he barked once; and so precisely the very instant when the thunder happened, that both sounds seemed to begin and to end together. Some dogs will clap their tails close, and sneak into a corner, at such a time, but Mungo it seems is of a more fearless family. A house at no great distance from ours was the mark to which the lightning was directed; it knocked down the chimney, split the building, and carried away the corner of the next house, in which lay a fellow drunk, and asleep upon his bed—it roused and terrified him, and he promises to get drunk no more; but I have seen a woful end of many such conversions. I remember but one such storm at Olney since I have known the place; and I am glad that it did not happen two days sooner for the sake of the ladies, who would probably, one of them at least, have been alarmed by it. I have received, since you went, two very flattering letters of thanks, one from Mr. Bacon, and one from Mr. Barham, such as might make a lean poet plump, and an humble poet proud. But being myself neither lean nor humble, I know of no other effect they had, than that they pleased me; and I communicate the intelligence to you, not without an assured hope that you will be pleased also. We are now going to walk, and thus far I have written before I have received your letter. Friday.—I must now be as compact as possible. When I began, I designed four sides, but my packet being transformed into two single epistles, I can consequently afford you but three. I have filled a large sheet with animadversions upon Pope. I am proceeding in my translation—"*Velis et remis, omnibus nervis*"—as Hudibras has it; and if God give me health and ability, will put it into your hands when I see you next. Mr. ——h has just left us. He has read my book, and, as if fearful that I had overlooked some of them myself, has pointed out to me all its beauties. I do assure you the man has a very acute discernment, and a taste that I have no fault to find with. I hope that you are of the same opinion.

Be not sorry that your love of Christ was excited in you by a picture. Could a dog or cat suggest to me the thought, that Christ is precious, I would not despise that thought because a dog or cat suggested it. The meanness of the instrument can not debase the nobleness of the principle. He that kneels before a picture of Christ, is an idolater. But he in whose heart the sight of a picture kindles a warm remembrance of the Saviour's sufferings, must be a Christian. Suppose that I dream as Gardiner did, that Christ walks before me, that he turns and smiles upon me, and fills my soul with ineffable love and joy. Will a man tell me that I am deceived, that I ought not to love or rejoice in him for such a reason, because a dream is merely a picture drawn upon the imagination? I hold not with such divinity. To love Christ is the greatest dignity of man, be that affection wrought in him how it may.

Adieu! May the blessing of God be upon you all! It is your mother's heart's wish and mine.

Yours ever, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *August* 27, 1785.

I WAS low in spirits yesterday, when your parcel came and raised them. Every proof of attention and regard to a man who lives in a vinegar bottle is welcome from his friends on the outside of it—accordingly your books were welcome (you must not forget by the way that I want the original, of which you have sent me the translation only) and the ruffles from Miss Shuttleworth most welcome. I am covetous, if ever man was, of living in the remembrance of absentees whom I highly value and esteem, and consequently felt myself much gratified by her very obliging present. I have had more comfort, far more comfort, in the connexions that I have formed within the last twenty years, than in the more numerous ones that I had before.

Memorandum—The latter are almost all Unwins or Unwinisms.

You are entitled to my thanks also for the facetious engravings of John Gilpin. A serious poem is like a swan, it flies heavily, and never far, but a jest has the wings of a swallow, that never tire, and that carry it into every nook and corner. I am perfectly a stranger however to the reception that my volume meets with, and I believe in respect of my *nonchalance* upon that subject, if authors would but copy so fair an example, am a most exemplary character. I must tell you nevertheless, that although the laurels that I gain at Olney will never minister much to my pride, I have acquired some. The Rev. Mr. S——— is my admirer, and thinks my second volume superior to my first. It ought to be so. If we do not improve by practice, then nothing can mend us; and a man has no more cause to be mortified at being told that he has excelled himself, than the elephant had, whose praise it was, that he was the greatest elephant in the world, himself excepted. If it be fair to judge of a book by an extract, I do not wonder that you were so little edified by Johnson's Journal. It is even more ridiculous than was poor ———'s of flatulent memory. The portion of it given to us in this day's paper contains not one sentiment worth one farthing; except the last, in which he re-

solves to bind himself with no more unbidden obligations. Poor man! one would think, that to pray for his dead wife, and to pinch himself with church fasts, had been almost the whole of his religion. I am sorry that he, who was so manly an advocate for the cause of virtue in all other places, was so childishly employed, and so superstitiously too, in his closet. Had he studied his Bible more, to which by his own confession he was in great part a stranger, he had known better what use to make of his retired hours, and had trifled less. His lucubrations of this sort have rather the appearance of religious dotage, than of any vigorous exertions towards God. It will be well if the publication prove not hurtful in its effects, by exposing the best cause, already too much despised, to ridicule still more profane. On the other side of the same paper I find a long string of aphorisms, and maxims, and rules for the conduct of life, which, though they appear not with his name, are so much in his manner, with the above-mentioned, that I suspect them for his. I have not read them all, but several of them I read that were trivial enough: for the sake of one however I give him the rest—he advises never to banish hope entirely, because it is the cordial of life, although it be the greatest flatterer in the world. Such a measure of hope as may not endanger my peace by disappointment I would wish to cherish upon every subject, in which I am interested. But there lies the difficulty. A cure however, and the only one, for all the irregularities both of hope and fear, is found in submission to the will of God. Happy they that have it!

This last sentence puts me in mind of your reference to Blair in a former letter, whom you there permitted to be your arbiter to adjust the respective claims of *who* or *that*. I do not rashly differ from so great a grammarian, nor do at any rate differ from him altogether—upon solemn occasions, as in prayer or preaching for instance, I would be strictly correct, and upon stately ones, for instance were I writing an epic poem, I would be so likewise, but not upon familiar occasions. God *who* heareth prayer, is right. Hector *who* saw Patroclus, is right. And the man *that* dresses me every day, is in my mind right also;—because the contrary would give an air of stiffness and pedantry to an expression, that in respect of the matter of it can not be too negligently made up.

Adieu, my dear William! I have scribbled with all my might, which, breakfast-time excepted, has been my employment ever since I rose, and it is now past one. Yours, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

MY DEAR COUSIN, *Oct.* 12, 1785.

It is no new thing with you to give pleasure. But I will venture to say that you do not often give more than you gave me this morning. When I came down to breakfast, and found upon the table a letter franked by my uncle, and when opening that frank I found that it contained a letter from you, I said within myself—'This is just as it should be. We are all grown young again, and the days that I thought I should see no more, are actually returned.' You perceive therefore that you judged well when you conjectured that a line from you would not be disagreeable to me. It could not be otherwise than as in fact it proved, a most agreeable surprise, for I can truly boast of an affection for you, that neither years, nor interrupted intercourse, have at all abated. I need only recollect how much I valued you once, and with how much cause, immediately to feel a revival of the same value: if that can be said to revive, which at the most has only been dormant for want of employment. But I slander it when I say that it has slept. A thousand times have I recollected a thousand scenes, in which our two selves have formed the whole of the drama, with the greatest pleasure; at times too, when I had no reason to suppose that I should ever hear from you again. I have laughed with you at the Arabian Nights' Entertainments, which afforded us, as you well know, a fund of merriment that deserves never to be forgot. I have walked with you to Netley Abbey, and have scrambled with you over hedges in every direction, and many other feats we have performed together, upon the field of my remembrance, and all within these few years. Should I say within this twelvemonth, I should not transgress the truth. The hours that I have spent with you were among the pleasantest of my former days, and are therefore chronicled in my mind so deeply as to feel no erasure. Neither do I forget my poor friend Sir Thomas. I should remember him indeed, at any rate, on account of his personal kindness to myself; but the last testimony that he gave of his regard for you endears him to me still more. With his uncommon understanding (for with many peculiarities he had more sense than any of his acquaintance,) and with his generous sensibilities, it was hardly possible that he should not distinguish you as he has done. As it was the last, so it was the best proof that he could give, of a judgment that never deceived him, when he would allow himself leisure to consult it.

You say that you have often heard of me; that puzzles me. I can not imagine from what quarter, but it is no matter. I must tell you however, my cousin, that your information has been a little defective. That I am happy in my situation is true; I live, and have lived these twenty years, with Mrs. Unwin, to whose affectionate care of me, during the far greater part of that time, it is under Providence owing that I live at all. But I do not account myself happy in having been for thirteen

of those years in a state of mind, that has made all that care and attention necessary; an attention and a care that have injured her health, and which, had she not been uncommonly supported, must have brought her to the grave. But I will pass to another subject; it would be cruel to particularize only to give pain, neither would I by any means give a sable hue to the first letter of a correspondence so unexpectedly renewed.

I am delighted with what you tell me of my uncle's good health. To enjoy any measure of cheerfulness at so late a day is much. But to have that late day enlivened with the vivacity of youth, is much more, and in these postdiluvian times a rarity indeed. Happy for the most part are parents who have daughters. Daughters are not apt to outlive their natural affections, which a son has generally survived even before his boyish years are expired. I rejoice particularly in my uncle's felicity, who has three female descendants from his little person, who leave him nothing to wish for upon that head.

My dear cousin, dejection of spirits, which (I suppose) may have prevented many a man from becoming an author, made me one. I find constant employment necessary, and therefore take care to be constantly employed. Manual occupations do not engage the mind sufficiently, as I know by experience, having tried many. But composition, especially of verse, absorbs it wholly. I write therefore generally three hours in a morning, and in an evening I transcribe. I read also, but less than I write, for I must have bodily exercise, and therefore never pass a day without it.

You ask me where I have been this summer. I answer, at Olney. Should you ask me where I spent the last seventeen summers, I should still answer at Olney. Ay, and the winters also; I have seldom left it, and except when I attended my brother in his last illness, never I believe a fortnight together.

Adieu, my beloved cousin, I shall not always be thus nimble in reply, but shall always have great pleasure in answering you when I can.

Yours, my friend and cousin, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR WILLIAM, *Oct.* 22, 1785.

You might well suppose that your letter had miscarried, though in fact it was duly received. I am not often so long in arrear, and you may assure yourself that when at any time it happens that I am so, neither neglect nor idleness is the cause. I have, as you well know, a daily occupation, forty lines to translate, a task which I never excuse myself when it is possible to perform it. Equally sedulous I am in the matter of transcribing, so that between both, my morning and evening are for the most part completely engaged. Add to this, that though my spirits are seldom so bad but I can write verse, they are often at so low an ebb as to make the production of a letter impossible. So much for a trespass which called for some apology, but for which to apologize further, would be to commit a greater trespass still.

I am now in the twentieth book of Homer, and shall assuredly proceed, because the farther I go the more I find myself justified in the undertaking: and in due time, if I live, shall assuredly publish. In the whole I shall have composed about forty thousand verses, about which forty thousand verses I shall have taken great pains, on no occasion suffering a slovenly line to escape me. I leave you to guess therefore whether, such a labour once achieved, I shall not determine to turn it to some account, and to gain myself profit if I can, if not, at least some credit, for my reward.

I perfectly approve of your course with John. The most entertaining books are best to begin with, and none in the world, so far as entertainment is concerned, deserves the preference to Homer. Neither do I know, that there is any where to be found Greek of easier construction. Poetical Greek I mean; and as for prose, I should recommend Xenophon's Cyropædia. That also is a most amusing narrative, and ten times easier to understand than the crabbed epigrams and scribblements of the minor poets, that are generally put into the hands of boys. I took particular notice of the neatness of John's Greek character, which (let me tell you) deserves its share of commendation; for to write the language legibly is not the lot of every man who can read it. Witness myself for one.

I like the little ode of Huntingford's that you sent me. In such matters we do not expect much novelty, or much depth of thought. The expression is all in all, which to me at least appears to be faultless.

Adieu, my dear William! We are well, and you and yours are ever the objects of our affection.

W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

MY DEAREST COUSIN, *Olney, Nov.* 9, 1785.

Whose last most affectionate letter has run in my head ever since I received it, and which I now sit down to answer two days sooner than the post will serve me; I thank you for it, and with a warmth for which I am sure you will give me credit, though I do not spend many words in describing it. I do not seek *new* friends, not being altogether sure that I should find them, but have unspeakable pleasure in being still beloved by an old

one. I hope that now our correspondence has suffered its last interruption; and that we shall go down together to the grave, chatting and chirping as merrily as such a scene of things as this will permit.

I am happy that my poems have pleased you. My volume has afforded me no such pleasure at any time, either while I was writing it, or since its publication, as I have derived from yours and my uncle's opinion of it. I make certain allowances for partiality, and for that peculiar quickness of taste, with which you both relish what you like, and after all drawbacks, upon those accounts duly made, find myself rich in the measure of your approbation that still remains. But upon all I honour John Gilpin, since it was he who first encouraged you to write. I made him on purpose to laugh at, and he served his purpose well; but I am now in debt to him for a more valuable acquisition than all the laughter in the world amounts to, the recovery of my intercourse with you, which is to me inestimable. My benevolent and generous cousin, when I was once asked if I wanted any thing, and given delicately enough to understand that the inquirer was ready to supply all my occasions, I thankfully and civilly, but positively, declined the favour. I neither suffer, nor have suffered any such inconveniences as I had not much rather endure, than come under obligations of that sort to a person comparatively with yourself a stranger to me. But to you I answer otherwise. I know you thoroughly, and the liberality of your disposition; and have that consummate confidence in the sincerity of your wish to serve me, that delivers me from all awkward constraint, and from all fear of trespassing by acceptance. To you, therefore, I reply, yes. Whensoever and whatsoever, and in what manner soever you please; and add moreover, that my affection for the giver is such, as will increase to me tenfold the satisfaction that I shall have in receiving. It is necessary, however, that I should let you a little into the state of my finances, that you may not suppose them more narrowly circumscribed than they are. Since Mrs. Unwin and I have lived at Olney, we have had but one purse, although during the whole of that time, till lately, her income was nearly double mine. Her revenues indeed are now in some measure reduced, and do not much exceed my own; the worst consequence of this is, that we are forced to deny ourselves some things which hitherto we have been better able to afford, but they are such things as neither life, nor the well-being of life depend upon. My own income has been better than it is, but when it was best, it would not have enabled me to live as my connexions demanded that I should, had it not been combined with a better than itself, at least at this end of the kingdom. Of this I had full proof during three months that I spent in lodgings at Huntingdon, in which time, by the help of good management, and a clear notion of economical matters, I contrived to spend the income of a twelvemonth. Now, my beloved cousin, you are in possession of the whole case as it stands. Strain no points to your own inconvenience or hurt, for there is no need of it, but indulge yourself in communicating (no matter what) that you can spare without missing it, since by so doing you will be sure to add to the comforts of my life one of the sweetest that I can enjoy—a token and proof of your affection.

In the affair of my next publication, toward which you also offer me so kindly your assistance, there will be no need that you should help me in the manner that you propose. It will be a large work, consisting, I should imagine, of six volumes at least. The twelfth of this month I shall have spent a year upon it, and it will cost me more than another. I do not love the booksellers well enough to make them a present of such a labour, but intend to publish by subscription. Your vote and interest, my dear cousin, upon the occasion, if you please, but nothing more! I will trouble you with some papers of proposals, when the time shall come, and am sure that you will circulate as many for me as you can. Now, my dear, I am going to tell you a secret. It is a great secret, that you must not whisper even to your cat. No creature is at this moment apprised of it but Mrs Unwin and her son. I am making a new translation of Homer, and am on the point of finishing the twenty-first book of the Iliad. The reasons upon which I undertake this Herculean labour, and by which I justify an enterprise in which I seem so effectually anticipated by Pope, although in fact he has not anticipated me at all, I may possibly give you, if you wish for them, when I can find nothing more interesting to say. A period which I do not conceive to be very near! I have not answered many things in your letter, nor can I do it at present for want of room. I can not believe but that I should know you, notwithstanding all that time may have done. There is not a feature of your face, could I meet it upon the road by itself, that I should not instantly recollect. I should say, that is my cousin's nose, or those are her lips and her chin, and no woman upon earth can claim them but herself. As for me, I am a very smart youth of my years. I am not indeed grown gray so much as I am grown bald. No matter. There was more hair in the world than ever had the honour to belong to me. Accordingly having found just enough to curl a little at my ears, and to intermix with a little of my own that still hangs behind, I appear, if you see me in the afternoon, to have a very decent head-dress, not easily distinguished from my natural growth; which being worn with a small bag, and a black riband about

my neck, continues to me the charms of my youth, even on the verge of age. Away with the fear of writing too often.

Yours, my dearest cousin, W. C.

P. S. ———That the view I give you of myself may be complete, I add the two following items—That I am in debt to nobody, and that I grow fat.

TO LADY HESKETH.

MY DEAREST COUSIN,

I AM glad that I always loved you as I did. It releases me from any occasion to suspect that my present affection for you is indebted for its existence to any selfish considerations. No, I am sure I love you disinterestedly, and for your own sake, because I never thought of you with any other sensations than those of the truest affection, even while I was under the influence of a persuasion that I should never hear from you again. But with my present feelings, superadded to those that I always had for you, I find it no easy matter to do justice to my sensations. I perceive myself in a state of mind similar to that of the traveller, described in Pope's Messiah, who, as he passes through a sandy desert, starts at the sudden and unexpected sound of a waterfall. You have placed me in a situation new to me, and in which I feel myself somewhat puzzled how I ought to behave. At the same time that I would not grieve you, by putting a check upon your bounty, I would be as careful not to abuse it, as if I were a miser, and the question not about your money, but my own.

Although I do not suspect that a secret to you, my cousin, is any burthen, yet having maturely considered that point, since I wrote my last, I feel myself altogether disposed to release you from the injunction, to that effect, under which I laid you. I have now made sush a progress in translation, that I need neither fear that I shall stop short of the end, nor that any other rider of Pegasus should overtake me. Therefore if at any time it should fall fairly in your way, or you should feel yourself invited to say I am so occupied, you have my poetship's free permission. Dr. Johnson read, and recommended my first volume. W. C.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Nov.* 9, 1785.

YOU desired me to return your good brother the bishop's charge as soon as I conveniently could, and the weather having forbidden us to hope for the pleasure of seeing you, and Mrs. Bagot with you, this morning, I return it now, lest, as you told me that your stay in this country would be short, you should be gone before it could reach you.

I wish, as you do, that the charge in question could find its way into all the parsonages in the nation. It is so generally applicable, and yet so pointedly enforced, that it deserves the most extensive spread. I find in it the happiest mixture of spiritual authority, the meekness of a Christian, and the good manners of a gentleman. It has convinced me, that the poet, who, like myself, shall take the liberty to pay the author of such valuable admonition a compliment, shall do at least as much honour to himself as to his subject.

Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Dec.* 24, 1785.

YOU would have found a letter from me at Mr. ———'s, according to your assignation, had not the post, setting out two hours sooner than the usual time, prevented me. The Odyssey that you sent has but one fault, at least but one that I have discovered, which is, that I can not read it. The very attempt, if persevered in, would soon make me as blind as Homer was himself. I am now in the last book of the Iliad; shall be obliged to you therefore for a more legible one by the first opportunity.

I wrote to Johnson lately, desiring him to give me advice and information on the subject of proposals for a subscription; and he desired me in his answer not to use that mode of publication, but to treat with him; adding, that he could make me such offers, as (he believed) I should approve. I have replied to his letter, but abide by my first purpose.

Having occasion to write to Mr. ———, concerning his princely benevolence, extended this year also to the poor of Olney, I put in a good word for my poor self likewise, and have received a very obliging and encouraging answer. He promises me six names in particular, that (he says) will do me no discredit, and expresses a wish to be served with papers as soon as they shall be printed.

I meet with encouragement from all quarters, such as I find need of indeed in an enterprise of such length and moment, but such as at the same time I find effectual. Homer is not a poet to be translated under the disadvantages of doubts and dejection.

Let me sing the praises of the desk which —— has sent me. In general, it is as elegant as possible. In particular, it is of cedar, beautifully lacquered. When put together, it assumes the

form of a handsome small chest, and contains all sorts of accommodations; it is inlaid with ivory, and serves the purpose of a reading desk.

Your affectionate, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Dec.* 24, 1785.

Till I had made such a progress in my present undertaking, as to put it out of all doubt that, if I lived, I should proceed in, and finish it, I kept the matter to myself. It would have done me little honour to have told my friends that I had an arduous enterprise in hand, if afterwards I must have told them that I had dropt it. Knowing it to have been universally the opinion of the literati, ever since they have allowed themselves to consider the matter coolly, that a translation, properly so called, of Homer is, notwithstanding what Pope has done, a desideratum in the English language, it struck me, that an attempt to supply the deficiency would be an honourable one; and having made myself, in former years, somewhat critically a master of the original, I was by this double consideration induced to make the attempt myself. I am now translating into blank verse the last book of the Iliad, and mean to publish by subscription.

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR WILLIAM, *Dec.* 31, 1785.

You have learned from my last that I am now conducting myself upon the plan that you recommended to me in the summer. But since I wrote it, I have made still farther advances in my negociation with Johnson. The proposals are adjusted. The proof-sheet has been printed off, corrected, and returned. They will be sent abroad as soon as I make up a complete list of the personages and persons to whom I would have them sent; which in a few days I hope to be able to accomplish. Johnson behaves very well, at least according to my conception of the matter, and seems sensible that I have dealt liberally with him. He wishes me to be a gainer by my labours, in his own words, 'to put something handsome into my pocket,' and recommends two large quartos for the whole. He would not (he says) by any means advise an extravagant price, and has fixed it at three guineas; the half, as usual, to be paid at the time of subscribing, the remainder on delivery. Five hundred names (he adds) at this price will put above a thousand pounds into my purse. I am doing my best to obtain them. Mr. Newton is warm in my service, and can do not a little. I have of course written to Mr. Bagot; who when he was here, with much earnestness and affection intreated me to do so, as soon as I should have settled the conditions. If I could get Sir Richard Sutton's address, I would write to him also, though I have been but once in his company since I left Westminster, where he and I read the Iliad and Odyssey through together. I enclose Lord Dartmouth's answer to my application, which I will get you to show to Lady Hesketh, because it will please her. I shall be glad if you can make an opportunity to call on her, during your present stay in town. You observe therefore that I am not wanting to myself. He that is so, has no just claim on the assistance of others, neither shall myself have cause to complain of me in other respects. I thank you for your friendly hints, and precautions, and shall not fail to give them the guidance of my pen. I respect the public, and I respect myself, and had rather want bread than expose myself wantonly to the condemnation of either. I hate the affectation so frequently found in authors, of negligence and slovenly slightness; and in the present case am sensible how necessary it is to shun them, when I undertake the vast and invidious labour of doing better than Pope has done before me. I thank you for all that you have said and done in my cause, and beforehand for all that you shall say and do hereafter. I am sure that there will be no deficiency on your part. In particular I thank you for taking such jealous care of my honour and respectability, when the man you mention applied for samples of my translation. When I deal in wine, cloth, or cheese, I will give samples, but of verse, never. No consideration would have induced me to comply with the gentleman's demand, unless he could have assured me that his wife had longed.

I have frequently thought with pleasure of the summer that you have had in your heart, while you have been employed in softening the severity of winter in behalf of so many who must otherwise have been exposed to it. I wish that you could make a general gaol delivery, leaving only those behind who can not elsewhere be so properly disposed of. You never said a better thing in your life, than when you assured Mr. ——— of the expediency of a gift of bedding to the poor of Olney. There is one article of this world's comforts, with which, as Falstaff says, they are so heinously unprovided. When a poor woman, and an honest one, whom we know well, carried home two pair of blankets, a pair for herself and husband, and a pair for her six children; as soon as the children saw them they jumped out of their straw, caught them in their arms, kissed them, blessed them, and danced for joy. An old woman, a very old one, the first night that she found herself so comfortably covered, could not sleep a wink, being kept awake by the contrary emotions, of

transport on the one hand, and the fear of not being thankful enough on the other.

It just occurs to me, to say, that this manuscript of mine will be ready for the press, as I hope, by the end of February. I shall have finished the Iliad in about ten days, and shall proceed immediately to the revisal of the whole. You must, if possible, come down to Olney, if it be only that you may take the charge of its safe delivery to Johnson. For if by any accident it should be lost, I am undone—the first copy being but a lean counterpart of the second.

Your mother joins with me in love and good wishes of every kind, to you, and all yours.

Adieu, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Jan. 10, 1786.

IT gave me great pleasure that you found my friend Unwin, what I was sure you would find him, a most agreeable man. I did not usher him in with the marrow-bones and cleavers of high-sounding panegyric, both because I was certain that whatsoever merit he had, your discernment would mark it, and because it is possible to do a man material injury by making his praise his harbinger. It is easy to raise expectation to such a pitch, that the reality, be it ever so excellent, must necessarily fall below it.

I hold myself much indebted to Mr. ————, of whom I have the first information from yourself, both for his friendly disposition towards me, and for the manner in which he marks the defects in my volume. An author must be tender indeed to wince on being touched so gently. It is undoubtedly as he says, and as you and my uncle say. You can not be all mistaken, neither is it at all probable that any of you should be so. I take it for granted therefore that there are inequalities in the composition, and I do assure you, my dear, most faithfully, that if it should reach a second edition, I will spare no pains to improve it. It may serve me for an agreeable amusement perhaps when Homer shall be gone and done with. The first edition of poems has generally been susceptible of improvement. Pope, I believe, never published one in his life that did not undergo variations; and his longest pieces, many. I will only observe, that inequalities there must be always, and in every work of length. There are level parts of every subject, parts which we can not with propriety attempt to elevate. They are by nature humble, and can only be made to assume an awkward and uncouth appearance by being mounted. But again I take it for granted that this remark does not apply to the matter of your objection. You were sufficiently aware of it before, and have no need that I should suggest it as an apology, could it have served that office, but would have made it for me yourself. In truth, my dear, had you known in what anguish of mind I wrote the whole of that poem, and under what perpetual interruptions from a cause that has since been removed, so that sometimes I had not an opportunity of writing more than three lines at a sitting, you would long since have wondered as much as I do myself, that it turned out any thing better than Grub-street.

My cousin, give yourself no trouble to find out any of the Magi to scrutinize my Homer. I can do without them; and if I were not conscious that I have no need of their help, I would be the first to call for it. Assure yourself that I intend to be careful to the utmost line of all possible caution, both with respect to language and versification. I will not send a verse to the press, that shall not have undergone the strictest examination.

A subscription is surely on every account the most eligible mode of publication. When I shall have emptied the purses of my friends, and of their friends, into my own, I am still free to levy contributions upon the world at large, and I shall then have a fund to defray the expenses of a new edition. I have ordered Johnson to print the proposals immediately, and hope that they will kiss your hands before the week is expired.

I have had the kindest letter from Josephus that I ever had. He mentioned my purpose to one of the Masters of Eton, who replied that 'such a work is much wanted.'

Yours affectionately, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR WILLIAM, *Jan.* 14, 1786.

I AM glad that you have seen Lady Hesketh. I knew that you would find her every thing that is amiable and elegant. Else, being my relation, I would never have shown her to you. She also was delighted with her visiter, and expects the greatest pleasure in seeing you again; but is under some apprehensions that a tender regard for the drum of your ear may keep you from her. Never mind! You have two drums; and if she should crack both, I will buy you a trumpet.

General Cowper having much pressed me to accompany my proposals with a specimen, I have sent him one. It is taken from the twenty-fourth book of the Iliad, and is part of the interview between Priam and Achilles. Tell me, if it be possible for any man to tell me—why did Homer leave off at the burial of Hector? Is it possible that he could be determined to it by a conceit, so little worthy of him, as that, having made the number of his books completely the alphabetical

number, he would not for the joke's sake proceed any farther? Why did he not give us the death of Achilles, and the destruction of Troy? Tell me also, if the critics, with Aristotle at their head, have not found that he left off exactly where he should; and that every epic poem, to all generations, is bound to conclude with the burial of Hector? I do not in the least doubt it. Therefore, if I live to write a dozen epic poems, I will always take care to bury Hector, and to bring all matters at that point to an immediate conclusion.

I had a truly kind letter from Mr. ———, written immediately on his recovery from the fever. I am bound to honour James's powder, not only for the services it has often rendered to myself, but still more for having been the means of preserving a life ten times more valuable to society, than mine is ever likely to be.

You say—"why should I trouble you with my troubles?" I answer—"why not? What is a friend good for, if we may not lay one end of the sack upon his shoulders, while we ourselves carry the other?"

You see your duty to God, and your duty to your neighbour; and you practise both with your best ability. Yet a certain person accounts you blind. I would that all the world were so blind even as you are. But there are some in it, who, like the Chinese, say—"We have two eyes; and other nations have but one!" I am glad however that in your one eye you have sight enough to discover that such censures are not worth minding.

I thank you heartily for every step you take in the advancement of my present purpose.

Contrive to pay Lady H. a long visit, for she has a thousand things to say.

Yours, my dear William, W. C.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Jan.* 15, 1786.

I HAVE just time to give you a hasty line to explain to you the delay that the publication of my proposals has unexpectedly encountered, and at which I suppose that you have been somewhat surprised.

I have a near relation in London and a warm friend in General Cowper; he is also a person as able as willing to render me material service. I lately made him acquainted with my design of sending into the world a new Translation of Homer, and told him that my papers would soon attend him. He soon after desired that I would annex to them a specimen of the work. To this I at first objected, for reasons that need not be enumerated here; but at last acceded to his advice; and accordingly the day before yesterday I sent him a specimen. It consists of one hundred and seven lines, and is taken from the interview between Priam and Achilles in the last book. I chose to extract from the latter end of the poem, and as near to the close of it as possible, that I might encourage a hope in the readers of it, that if they found it in some degree worthy of their approbation, they would find the former parts of their work not less so. For if a writer flags any where, it must be when he is near the end.

My subscribers will have an option given them in the proposals respecting the price. My predecessor in the same business was not quite so moderate.—You may say perhaps (at least if your kindness for me did not prevent it you would be ready to say) "It is well—but do you place yourself on a level with Pope?" I answer, or rather *should* answer—"By no means—not as a poet; but as a translator of Homer, if I did not expect and believe that I should even surpass him, why have I meddled with this matter at all? If I confess inferiority, I reprobate my own undertaking."

When I can hear of the rest of the bishops, that they preach and live as your brother does, I will think more respectfully of them than I feel inclined to do at present. They may be learned, and I know that some of them are; but your brother, learned as he is, has other more powerful recommendations. Persuade him to publish his poetry, and I promise you that he shall find as warm and sincere an admirer in me as in any man that lives. Yours, my dear friend,

Very affectionately, W. C.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

Jan. 23, 1786.

MY DEAR AND FAITHFUL FRIEND,

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The paragraphs that I am now beginning will contain information of a kind that I am not very fond of communicating, and on a subject that I am not very fond of writing about. Only to you I will open my budget without reserve, because I know that in what concerns my authorship you take an interest that demands my confidence, and will be pleased with every occurrence that is at all propitious to my endeavours. Lady Hesketh, who, had she as many mouths as Virgil's Fame, with a tongue in each, would employ them all in my service, writes me word that Dr. Maty of the Museum has read my Task. I can not even to you relate what he says of it; though, when I began this story, I thought I had courage enough to tell it boldly. He designs however to give his opinion of it in his next Monthly Review; and being informed that I was about to finish a translation of Homer, asked her Ladyship's leave to

mention the circumstance on that occasion. This incident pleases me the more, because I have authentic intelligence of his being a critical character in all its forms, acute, sour, and blunt; and so incorruptible withal, and so unsusceptible of bias from undue motives, that, as my correspondent informs me, he would not praise his own mother, did he not think she deserved it.

The said Task is likewise gone to Oxford, conveyed thither by an intimate friend of Dr. ———, with a purpose of putting it into his hands. My friend, what will they do with me at Oxford? Will they burn me at Carfax, or will they anathematize me with bell, book, and candle? I can say with more truth than Ovid did—*Parve nec invideo.*

The said Dr. ——— has been heard to say, and I give you his own words (stop both your ears while I utter them) "that Homer has never been translated, and that Pope was a fool." Very irreverent language to be sure, but in consideration of the subject on which he used them, we will pardon it, even in a dean. One of the masters of Eton told a friend of mine lately, that a translation of Homer is much wanted. So now you have all my news * * * *

Yours, my dearest friend, cordially, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Olney, Jan. 31, 1786.

IT is very pleasant, my dearest cousin, to receive a present so delicately conveyed as that which I received so lately from Anonymous; but it is also very painful to have nobody to thank for it. I find myself therefore driven by stress of necessity to the following resolution, viz. that I will constitute you my Thank-receiver general for whatsoever gift I shall receive hereafter, as well as for those that I have already received from a nameless benefactor. I therefore thank you, my cousin, for a most elegant present, including the most elegant compliment that ever poet was honoured with; for a snuff-box of tortoise-shell, with a beautiful landscape on the lid of it, glazed with crystal, having the figures of three hares in the fore-ground, and inscribed above with these words, *The Peasant's Nest*—and below with these—*Tiney, Puss, and Bess.* For all and every of these I thank you, and also for standing proxy on this occasion. Nor must I forget to thank you, that so soon after I had sent you the first letter of Anonymous, I received another in the same hand.—There, now I am a little easier.

I have almost conceived a design to send up half a dozen stout country fellows, to tie by the leg to their respective bedposts the company that so abridges your opportunity of writing to me. Your letters are the joy of my heart, and I can not endure to be robbed, by I know not whom, of half my treasure. But there is no comfort without a drawback, and therefore it is that I, who have unknown friends, have unknown enemies also. Ever since I wrote last I find myself in better health, and my nocturnal spasms and fever considerably abated. I intend to write to Dr. Kerr on Thursday, that I may gratify him with an account of my amendment; for to him I know that it will be a gratification. Were he not a physician I should regret that he lives so distant, for he is a most agreeable man; but being what he is, it would be impossible to have his company, even if he were a neighbour, unless in time of sickness; at which time, whatever charms he might have himself, my own must necessarily lose much of their effect on him.

When I write to you, my dear, what I have already related to the General, I am always fearful lest I should tell you that for news with which you are well acquainted. For once however I will venture.—On Wednesday last I received from Johnson the MS. copy of a specimen, that I had sent to the General; and, enclosed in the same cover, notes upon it by an unknown critic. Johnson, in a short letter, recommended him to me as a man of unquestionable learning and ability. On perusal and consideration of his remarks I found him such; and having nothing so much at heart as to give all possible security to yourself and the General, that my work shall not come forth unfinished, I answered Johnson that I would gladly submit my MS. to his friend. He is in truth a very clever fellow, perfectly a stranger to me, and one who I promise you will not spare for severity of animadversion, where he shall find occasion. It is impossible for you, my dearest Cousin, to express a wish that I do not equally feel a wish to gratify. You are desirous that Maty should see a book of my Homer, and for that reason if Maty *will* see a book of it, he shall be welcome, although time is likely to be precious, and consequently any delay that is not absolutely necessary, as much as possible to be avoided. I am now revising the Iliad. It is a business that will cost me four months, perhaps five; for I compare the very words as I go, and if much alteration should occur, must transcribe the whole. The first book I have almost transcribed already. To these five months Johnson says that nine more must be added for printing, and upon my own experience I will venture to assure you, that the tardiness of printers will make those nine months twelve. There is danger therefore that my subscribers may think that I make them wait too long, and that they who know me not may suspect a bubble. How glad shall I be to read it over in an evening, book by book, as fast as I settle the copy, to you, and to Mrs. Unwin! She has been my touch-

stone always, and without reference to her taste and judgment I have printed nothing. With one of you at each elbow, I should think myself the happiest of all poets.

The General and I, having broken the ice, are upon the most comfortable terms of correspondence. He writes very affectionately to me, and I say every thing to him that comes uppermost. I could not write frequently to any creature living, upon any other terms than those. He tells me of infirmities that he has, which makes him less active than he was: I am sorry to hear that he has any such. Alas! alas! he was young when I saw him, only twenty years ago.

I have the most affectionate letter imaginable from Colman, who writes to me like a brother. The Chancellor is yet dumb.

May God have you in his keeping, my beloved cousin. Farewell, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

MY DEAREST COUSIN, *Olney, Feb.* 9, 1786.

I HAVE been impatient to tell you that I am impatient to see you again. Mrs. Unwin partakes with me in all my feelings upon this subject, and longs also to see you. I should have told you so by the last post, but have been so completely occupied by this tormenting specimen, that it was impossible to do it. I sent the General a letter on Monday, that would distress and alarm him; I sent him another yesterday, that will I hope quiet him again. Johnson has apologized very civilly for the multitude of his friend's strictures; and his friend has promised to confine himself in future to a comparison of me with the original, so that (I doubt not) we shall jog on merrily together. And now, my dear, let me tell you once more, that your kindness in promising us a visit has charmed us both. I shall see you again. I shall hear your voice. We shall take walks together. I will show you my prospects, the hovel, the alcove, the Ouse, and its banks, every thing that I have described. I anticipate the pleasure of those days not very far distant, and feel a part of it at this moment. Talk not of an inn! Mention it not for your life! We have never had so many visitors, but we could easily accommodate them all; though we have received Unwin, and his wife, and his sister, and his son, all at once. My dear, I will not let you come till the end of May, or beginning of June, because before that time my greenhouse will not be ready to receive us, and it is the only pleasant room belonging to us. When the plants go out, we go in. I line it with mats, and spread the floor with mats; and there you shall sit with a bed of mignonette at your side, and a hedge of honeysuckles, roses, and jasmine; and I will make you a bouquet of myrtle every day. Sooner than the time I mention the country will not be in complete beauty. And I will tell you what you shall find at your first entrance. Imprimis, as soon as you have entered the vestibule, if you cast a look on either side of you, you shall see on the right hand a box of my making. It is the box in which have been lodged all my hares, and in which lodges Puss at present. But he, poor fellow, is worn out with age, and promises to die before you can see him. On the right hand, stands a cup-board, the work of the same author; it was once a dove-cage, but I transformed it. Opposite to you stands a table, which I also made. But a merciless servant having scrubbed it until it became paralytic, it serves no purpose now but of ornament; and all my clean shoes stand under it. On the left hand, at the farther end of this superb vestibule, you will find the door of the parlour, into which I will conduct you, and where I will introduce you to Mrs. Unwin, unless we should meet her before, and where we will be as happy as the day is long. Order yourself, my cousin, to the Swan at Newport, and there you shall find me ready to conduct you to Olney.

My dear, I have told Homer what you say about casks and urns, and have asked him, whether he is sure that it is a cask, in which Jupiter keeps his wine. He swears that it is a cask, and that it will never be any thing better than a cask to eternity. So if the god is content with it, we must even wonder at his taste, and be so too.

Adieu! my dearest, dearest cousin, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

MY DEAREST COUSIN, *Olney, Feb.* 11, 1786.

IT must be (I suppose) a fortnight or thereabout since I wrote last, I feel myself so alert and so ready to write again. Be that as it may, here I come. We talk of nobody but you. What we will do with you when we get you, where you shall walk, where you shall sleep, in short every thing that bears the remotest relation to your well-being at Olney, occupies all our talking time, which is all that I do not spend at Troy.

I have every reason for writing to you as often as I can, but I have a particular reason for doing it now. I want to tell you that by the Diligence on Wednesday next, I mean to send you a quire of my Homer for Maty's perusal. It will contain the first book, and as much of the second as brings us to the catalogue of the ships, and is every morsel of the revised copy that I have transcribed. My dearest cousin, read it yourself, let the General read it, do what you please with it, so that it reach Johnson in due time. But let Maty be the only *critic* that has any thing to do with it.

The vexation, the perplexity, that attends a multiplicity of criticisms by various hands, many of which are sure to be futile, many of them ill-founded, and some of them contradictory to others, is inconceivable, except by the author, whose ill-fated work happens to be the subject of them. This also appears to be self-evident, that if a work have passed under the review of one man of taste and learning, and have had the good fortune to please him, his approbation gives security for that of all others qualified like himself. I speak thus, my dear, after having just escaped from such a storm of trouble, occasioned by endless remarks, hints, suggestions, and objections, as drove me also to despair, and to the very verge of a resolution to drop my undertaking for ever. With infinite difficulty I at last sifted the chaff from the wheat, availed myself of what appeared to me to be just, and rejected the rest, but not till the labour and anxiety had nearly undone all that Kerr had been doing for me. My beloved cousin, trust me for it, as you safely may, that temper, vanity, and self-importance, had nothing to do in all this distress that I suffered. It was merely the effect of an alarm, that I could not help taking, when I compared the great trouble I had with a few lines only, thus handled, with that which I foresaw such handling of the whole must necessarily give me. I felt beforehand that my constitution would not bear it. I shall send up this second specimen in a box, that I have made on purpose; and when Maty has done with the copy, and you have done with it yourself, then you must return it in said box to my translatorship. Though Johnson's friend has teased me sadly, I verily believe that I shall have no more such cause to complain of him. We now understand one another, and I firmly believe that I might have gone the world through, before I had found his equal in an accurate and familiar acquaintance with the original.

A letter to Mr. Urban in the late Gentleman's Magazine, of which I's book is the subject, pleases me more than any thing I have seen in the way of eulogium yet. I have no guess of the author.

I do not wish to remind the Chancellor of his promise. Ask you why, my cousin? Because I suppose it would be impossible. He has no doubt forgotten it entirely, and would be obliged to take my word for the truth of it, which I could not bear. We drank tea together with Mrs. C——e, and her sister, in King-street, Bloomsbury, and there was the promise made. I said—"Thurlow, I am nobody, and shall be always nobody, and you will be Chancellor. You shall provide for me when you are." He smiled, and replied, "I surely will." "These ladies," said I, "are witnesses." He still smiled, and said—"Let them be so, for I will certainly do it." But alas! twenty-four years have passed since the day of the date thereof; and to mention it now would be to upbraid him with inattention to his blighted troth. Neither do I suppose he could easily serve such a creature as I am, if he would.

Adieu, whom I love entirely, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

MY DEAREST COUSIN, *Olney, Feb.* 19, 1786

SINCE so it must be, so it shall be. If you will not sleep under the roof of a friend, may you never sleep under the roof of an enemy! An enemy however you will not presently find. Mrs. Unwin bids me mention her affectionately, and tell you that she willingly gives up a part, for the sake of the rest, willingly, at least as far as willingly may consist with some reluctance; I feel my reluctance too. Our design was, that you should have slept in the room that serves me for a study, and its having been occupied by you would have been an additional recommendation of it to me. But all reluctances are superseded by the thought of seeing you: and because we have nothing so much at heart as the wish to see you happy and comfortable, we are desirous therefore to accommodate you to your own mind, and not to ours. Mrs. Unwin has already secured for you an apartment, or rather two, just such as we could wish. The house in which you will find them is within thirty yards of our own, and opposite to it. The whole affair is thus commodiously adjusted; and now I have nothing to do but to wish for June; and June, my cousin, was never so wished for, since June was made. I shall have a thousand things to hear, and a thousand to say, and they will all rush into my mind together, till it will be so crowded, with things impatient to be said, that for some time I shall say nothing. But no matter—sooner or later they will all come out; and since we shall have you the longer for not having you under our own roof (a circumstance, that, more than any thing, reconciles us to that measure), they will stand the better chance. After so long a separation, a separation that of late seemed likely to last for life, we shall meet each other as alive from the dead; and for my own part I can truly say, that I have not a friend in the other world, whose resurrection would give me greater pleasure.

I am truly happy, my dear, in having pleased you with what you have seen of my Homer. I wish that all English readers had your unsophisticated, or rather unadulterated taste, and could relish simplicity like you. But I am well aware that in this respect I am under a disadvantage, and that many, especially many ladies, missing many turns and prettinesses of expression, that

they have admired in Pope, will account my translation in those particulars defective. But I comfort myself with the thought, that in reality it is no defect; on the contrary, that the want of all such embellishments as do not belong to the original will be one of its principal merits with persons indeed capable of relishing Homer. He is the best poet that ever lived for many reasons, but for none more than for that majestic plainness that distinguishes him from all others. As an accomplished person moves gracefully without thinking of it, in like manner the dignity of Homer seems to cost him no labour. It was natural to him to say great things, and to say them well, and little ornaments were beneath his notice. If Maty, my dearest cousin, should return to you my copy with any such strictures as may make it necessary for me to see it again, before it goes to Johnson, in that case you shall send it to me, otherwise to Johnson immediately; for he writes me word he wishes his friend to go to work upon it as soon as possible. When you come, my dear, we will hang all these critics together. For they have worried me without remorse or conscience. At least one of them has. I had actually murdered more than a few of the best lines in the specimen, in compliance with his requisitions, but plucked up my courage at last, and in that very last opportunity that I had, recovered them to life again by restoring the original reading. At the same time I readily confess that the specimen is the better for all this discipline its author has undergone; but then it has been more indebted for its improvement to that pointed accuracy of examination, to which I was myself excited, than to any proposed amendments from Mr. Critic; for as sure as you are my cousin, whom I long to see at Olney, so surely would he have done me irritable mischief, if I would have given him leave.

My friend Bagot writes to me in a most friendly strain, and calls loudly upon me for original poetry. When I shall have done with Homer, probably he will not call in vain. Having found the prime feather of a swan on the banks of the *smug and silver Trent*, he keeps it for me.

Adieu, dear cousin, W. C.

I am sorry that the General has such indifferent health. He must not die. I can by no means spare a person so kind to me.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

Olney, Feb. 27, 1786.

Alas! alas! my dear, dear friend, may God himself comfort you! I will not be so absurd as to attempt it. By the close of your letter it should seem, that in this hour of great trial he withholds not his consolations from you. I know by experience that they are neither few nor small; and though I feel for you as I never felt for man before, yet do I sincerely rejoice in this, that whereas there is but one true comforter in the universe, under afflictions such as yours, you both know him, and know where to seek him. I thought you a man the most happily mated, that I had ever seen, and had great pleasure in your felicity. Pardon me, if now I feel a wish that, short as my acquaintance with her was, I had never seen her. I should have mourned with you, but not as I do now. Mrs. Unwin sympathizes with you also most sincerely, and you neither are, nor will be soon forgotten in such prayers as we can make at Olney. I will not detain you longer now, my poor afflicted friend, than to commit you to the tender mercy of God, and to bid you a sorrowful adieu!

Adieu! ever yours, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Olney, March 6, 1786.

MY DEAREST COUSIN,

Your opinion has more weight with me than that of all the critics in the world; and to give you a proof of it, I make you a covenant, that I would hardly have made to them all united. I do not indeed absolutely covenant, promise, and agree, that I will discard *all* my elisions, but I hereby bind myself to dismiss *as many* of them as, without sacrificing energy to sound, I can. It is incumbent upon me in the mean time to say something in justification of the few that I shall retain, that I may not seem a poet mounted rather on a mule than on Pegasus. In the first place, *The*, is a barbarism. We are indebted for it to the Celts, or the Goths, or to the Saxons, or perhaps to them all. In the two best languages that ever were spoken, the Greek and the Latin, there is no similar incumbrance of expression to be found. Secondly, The perpetual use of it in our language is to us miserable poets attended with two great inconveniences. Our verse consisting only of ten syllables, it not unfrequently happens that a fifth part of a line is to be engrossed, and necessarily too, (unless elision prevents it) by this abominable intruder; and, which is worse in my account, open vowels are continually the consequence—*The* element—*The* air, &c. Thirdly, the French, who are equally with the English chargeable with barbarism in this particular, dispose of their *Le* and their *La* without ceremony, and always take care that they shall be absorbed, both in verse and in prose, in the vowel that immediately follows them. Fourthly, and I believe lastly, (and for your sake I wish it may prove so) the practice of cutting short a *The* is warranted by Milton, who of all

English poets that ever lived, had certainly the finest ear. Dr. Warton indeed has dared to say that he had a bad one; for which he deserves, as far as critical demerit can deserve it, to lose his own. I thought I had done, but there is still a fifthly behind, and it is this, that the custom of abbreviating *The* belongs to the style in which, in my advertisement annexed to the specimen, I profess to write. The use of that style would have warranted me in the practice of much greater liberty of this sort than I ever intended to take. In perfect consistence with that style I might say, l' th' tempest, l' th' door-way, &c., which however I would not allow myself to do, because I was aware that it would be objected to, and with reason. But it seems to me for the causes above said, that when I shorten *The*, before a vowel, or before *wh*, as in the line you mention,

"Than th' whole broad Hellespont in all its parts,"

my license is not equally exceptionable, because *W* though he rank as a consonant in the word *whole*, is not allowed to announce himself to the ear; and *H* is an aspirate. But as I said at the beginning, so say I still, I am most willing to conform myself to your very sensible observation, that it is necessary, if we would please, to consult the taste of our own day; neither would I have pelted you, my dearest cousin, with any part of this volley of good reasons, had I not designed them as an answer to those objections which you say you have heard from others. But I only mention them. Though satisfactory to myself, I waive them, and will allow to *The* his whole dimensions, whensoever it can be done.

Thou only critic of my verse that is to be found in all the earth, whom I love, what shall I say in answer to your own objection to that passage,

"Softly he plac'd his hand
On the old man's hand, and push'd it gently away?"

I can say neither more nor less than this, that when our dear friend, the General, sent me his opinion of the specimen, quoting those very few words from it, he added, "With this part I was particularly pleased; there is nothing in poetry more descriptive." Such were his very words. Taste, my dear, is various: there is nothing so various; and even between the persons of the best taste there are diversities of opinion on the same subject, for which it is not possible to account. So much for these matters.

You advise me to consult the General, and to confide in him. I follow your advice, and have done both. By the last post I asked his permission to send him the books of my Homer, as fast as I should finish them off. I shall be glad of his remarks, and more glad than of any thing, to do that which I hope may be agreeable to him. They will of course pass into your hands before they are sent to Johnson. The quire that I sent is now in the hands of Johnson's friend. I intended to have told you in my last, but forgot it, that Johnson behaves very handsomely in the affair of my two volumes. He acts with a liberality not often found in persons of his occupation, and to mention it, when occasion calls me to it, is a justice due to him.

I am very much pleased with Mr. Stanley's letter—several compliments were paid me, on the subject of that first volume, by my own friends; but I do not recollect that I ever knew the opinion of a stranger about it before, whether favourable or otherwise; I only heard by a side wind, that it was very much read in Scotland, and more than here.

Farewell, my dearest cousin, whom we expect, of whom we talk continually, and whom we continually long for. W. C.

Your anxious wishes for my success delight me, and you may rest assured, my dear, that I have all the ambition on the subject that you can wish me to feel. I more than admire my author. I often stand astonished at his beauties. I am for ever amused with the translation of him, and I have received a thousand encouragements. These are all so many happy omens, that I hope shall be verified by the event.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN

MY DEAR FRIEND, *March* 13, 1786.

I SEEM to be about to write to you, but I foresee that it will not be a letter, but a scrap that I shall send you. I could tell you things that, knowing how much you interest yourself in my success, I am sure would please you, but every moment of my leisure is necessarily spent at Troy. I am revising my translation, and bestowing on it more labour than at first. At the repeated solicitation of General Cowper, who had doubtless irrefragable reason on his side, I have put my book into the hands of the most extraordinary critic that I have ever heard of. He is a Swiss; has an accurate knowledge of English, and for his knowledge of Homer has, I verily believe, no fellow. Johnson recommended him to me. I am to send him the quires as fast as I finish them off, and the first is now in his hands. I have the comfort to be able to tell you, that he is very much pleased with what he has seen. Johnson wrote to me lately on purpose to tell me so. Things having taken this turn, I fear that I must beg a release from my engagement to put the MS. into your hands. I am bound to print as soon as three hundred shall have subscribed, and consequently have not an hour to spare.

People generally love to go where they are admired, yet lady Hesketh complains of not having seen you. Yours, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

April 5, 1786.

I did, as you suppose, bestow all possible consideration on the subject of an apology for my Homerican undertaking. I turned the matter about in my mind an hundred different ways, and in every way in which it would present itself found it an impracticable business. It is impossible for me, with what delicacy soever I may manage it, to state the objections that lie against Pope's translation, without incurring odium, and the imputation of arrogance; foreseeing this danger, I choose to say nothing. W. C.

P. S.—You may well wonder at my courage, who have undertaken a work of such enormous length. You would wonder more if you knew that I translated the whole Iliad with no other help than a Clavis. But I have since equipped myself better for this immense journey, and am revising the work in company with a good commentator.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Olney, April 17, 1786.

MY DEAREST COUSIN,

If you will not quote Solomon, my dearest cousin, I will. He says, and as beautifully as truly—"Hope deferred maketh the heart sick, but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life!" I feel how much reason he had on his side when he made this observation, and am myself sick of your fortnight's delay.

* * * * * * *

The vicarage was built by Lord Dartmouth, and was not finished till some time after we arrived at Olney, consequently it is new. It is a smart stone building well sashed, by much too good for the living, but just what I would wish for you. It has, as you justly concluded from my premises, a garden, but rather calculated for use than ornament. It is square, and well walled, but has neither arbour, nor alcove, nor other shade, except the shadow of the house. But we have two gardens, which are yours. Between your mansion and ours is interposed nothing but an orchard, into which a door opening out of our garden affords us the easiest communication imaginable, will save the round-about by the town, and make both houses one. Your chamber-windows look over the river, and over the meadows, to a village called Emberton, and command the whole length of a long bridge, described by a certain poet, together with a view of the road at a distance. Should you wish for books at Olney, you must bring them with you, or you will wish in vain, for I have none but the works of a certain poet, Cowper, of whom perhaps you have heard, and they are as yet but two volumes. They may multiply hereafter, but at present they are no more.

You are the first person for whom I have heard Mrs. Unwin express such feelings as she does for you. She is not profuse in professions, nor forward to enter into treaties of friendship with new faces, but when her friendship is once engaged, it may be confided in even unto death. She loves you already, and how much more will she love you before this time twelvemonth! I have indeed endeavoured to describe you to her, but perfectly as I have you by heart, I am sensible that my picture can not do you justice. I never saw one that did. Be you what you may, you are much beloved and will be so at Olney, and Mrs. U. expects you with the pleasure that one feels at the return of a long absent, dear relation; that is to say, with a pleasure such as mine. She sends you her warmest affections.

On Friday I received a letter from dear Anonymous, apprising me of a parcel that the coach would bring me on Saturday. Who is there in the world that has, or thinks he has reason to love me to the degree that he does? But it is no matter. He chooses to be unknown, and his choice is, and ever shall be so sacred to me, that if his name lay on the table before me reversed, I would not turn the paper about that I might read it. Much as it would gratify me to thank him, I would turn my eyes away from the forbidden discovery. I long to assure him that those same eyes, concerning which he expresses such kind apprehensions, lest they should suffer by this laborious undertaking, are as well as I could expect them to be, if I were never to touch either book or pen. Subject to weakness, and occasional slight inflammations, it is probable that they will always be; but I can not remember the time when they enjoyed any thing so like an exemption from those infirmities as at present. One would almost suppose that reading Homer were the best ophthalmic in the world. I should be happy to remove his solicitude on the subject, but it is a pleasure that he will not let me enjoy. Well then, I will be content without it; and so content that, though I believe you, my dear, to be in full possession of all this mystery, you shall never know me, while you live, either directly, or by hints of any sort, attempt to extort, or to steal the secret from you. I should think myself as justly punishable as the Bethshemites, for looking into the ark, which they were not allowed to touch.

I have not sent for Kerr, for Kerr can do nothing but send me to Bath, and to Bath I can not go for a thousand reasons. The summer will set me up again; I grow fat every day, and shall be as big as Gog or Magog, or both put together, before you come.

I did actually live three years with Mr. Chapman, a solicitor, that is to say, I slept three years in his house, but I lived, that is to say, I spent my days in Southampton Row, as you very well remember. There was I, and the future Lord Chancellor, constantly employed from morning to night in giggling and making giggle, instead of studying the law. O fie, cousin! how could you do so? I am pleased with Lord Thurlow's inquiries about me. If he takes it into that inimitable head of his, he may make a man of me yet. I could love him heartily if he would but deserve it at my hands. That I did so once is certain. The Duchess of ———, who in the world set her a going? But if all the duchesses in the world were spinning, like so many whirligigs, for my benefit, I would not stop them. It is a noble thing to be a poet, it makes all the world so lively. I might have preached more sermons than even Tillotson did, and better, and the world would have been still fast asleep, but a volume of verse is a fiddle that puts the universe in motion.

Yours, my dear friend and cousin, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Olney, April 24, 1786.

YOUR letters are so much my comfort that I often tremble lest by any accident I should be disappointed; and the more because you have been, more than once, so engaged in company on the writing day, that I have had a narrow escape. Let me give you a piece of good counsel, my cousin; follow my laudable example, write when you can, take Time's forelock in one hand, and a pen in the other, and so make sure of your opportunity. It is well for me that you write faster than any body, and more in an hour than other people in two, else I know not what would become of me. When I read your letters I hear you talk, and I love talking letters dearly, especially from you. Well! the middle of June will not be always a thousand years off, and when it comes I shall hear you, and see you too, and shall not care a farthing then if you do not touch a pen in a month. By the way, you must either send me, or bring me some more paper, for before the moon shall have performed a few more revolutions I shall not have a scrap left, and tedious revolutions they are just now, that is certain.

I give you leave to be as peremptory as you please, especially at a distance; but when you say that you are a Cowper (and the better it is for the Cowpers that such you are, and I give them joy of you, with all my heart) you must not forget that I boast myself a Cowper too, and have my humours, and fancies, and purposes, and determinations, as well as others of my name, and hold them as fast as they can. *You* indeed tell *me* how often I shall see you when you come. A pretty story truly. I am a *he* Cowper, my dear, and claim the privileges that belong to my noble sex. But these matters shall be settled, as my cousin Agamemnon used to say, at a more convenient time.

I shall rejoice to see the letter you promise me, for though I met with a morsel of praise last week, I do not know that the week current is likely to produce me any, and having lately been pretty much pampered with that diet, I expect to find myself rather hungry by the time when your next letter shall arrive. It will therefore be very opportune. The morsel above alluded to, came from —whom do you think? From ———, but she desires that her authorship may be a secret. And in my answer I promised not to divulge it except to you. It is a pretty copy of verses, neatly written, and well turned, and when you come you shall see them. I intend to keep all pretty things to myself till then, that they may serve me as a bait to lure you hither more effectually. The last letter that I had from ——— I received so many years since, that it seems as if it had reached me a good while before I was born.

I was grieved at the heart that the General could not come, and that illness was in part the cause that hindered him. I have sent him, by his express desire, a new edition of the first book, and half the second. He would not suffer me to send it to you, my dear, lest you should post it away to Maty at once. He did not give that reason, but, being shrewd, I found it.

The grass begins to grow, and the leaves to bud, and every thing is preparing to be beautiful against you come. Adieu, W. C.

You inquire of our walks, I perceive, as well as of our rides. They are beautiful. You inquire also concerning a cellar. You have two cellars. Oh! what years have passed since we took the same walks, and drank out of the same bottle! but a few more weeks and then!

TO LADY HESKETH.

Olney, May 8, 1786.

I DID not at all doubt that your tenderness for my feelings had inclined you to suppress in your letters to me the intelligence concerning Maty's critique, that yet reached me from another quarter. When I wrote to you I had not learned it from

the General, but from my friend Bull, who only knew it by hearsay. The next post brought me the news of it from the first-mentioned, and the critique itself enclosed. Together with it came also a squib discharged against me in the Public Advertiser. The General's letter found me in one of my most melancholy moods, and my spirits did not rise on the receipt of it. The letter indeed that he had cut from the newspaper gave me little pain, both because it contained nothing formidable, though written with malevolence enough, and because a nameless author can have no more weight with his readers than the reason which he has on his side can give him. But Maty's animadversions hurt me more. In part they appeared to me unjust, and in part ill-natured, and yet the man himself being an oracle in every body's account, I apprehended that he had done me much mischief. Why he says that the translation is far from exact, is best known to himself. For I know it to be as exact as is compatible with poetry; and prose translations of Homer are not wanted, the world has one already. But I will not fill my letter to you with hypercriticisms, I will only add an extract from a letter of Colman's, that I received last Friday, and will then dismiss the subject. It came accompanied by a copy of the specimen, which he himself had amended, and with so much taste and candour that it charmed me. He says as follows;

'One copy I have returned with some remarks, prompted by my zeal for your success, not, Heaven knows, by arrogance or impertinence. I know no other way at once so plain and so short, of delivering my thoughts on the specimen of your translation, which on the whole I admire exceedingly, thinking it breathes the spirit, and conveys the manner of the original; though having here neither Homer, nor Pope's Homer, I can not speak precisely of particular lines or expressions, or compare your blank verse with his rhyme, except by declaring, that I think blank verse infinitely more congenial to the magnificent simplicity of Homer's hexameters, than the confined couplets, and the jingle of rhyme.'———

His amendments are chiefly bestowed on the lines encumbered with elisions, and I will just take this opportunity to tell you, my dear, because I know you to be as much interested in what I write as myself, that some of the most offensive of those elisions were occasioned by mere criticism. I was fairly hunted into them, by vexatious objections made without end by ——, and his friend, and altered, and altered, till at last I did not care how I altered. Many thanks for ——'s verses, which deserve just the character you give of them. They are neat and easy—but I would mumble her well, if I could get at her, for allowing herself to suppose for a moment that I praised the Chancellor with a view to emolument. I wrote those stanzas merely for my own amusement, and they slept in a dark closet years after I composed them; not in the least designed for publication. But when Johnson had printed off the longer pieces, of which the first volume principally consists, he wrote me word that he wanted yet two thousand lines to swell it to a proper size. On that occasion it was that I collected every scrap of verse that I could find, and that among the rest. None of the smaller poems had been introduced or had been published at all with my name, but for this necessity.

Just as I wrote the last word I was called down to Dr. Kerr, who came to pay me a voluntary visit. Were I sick, his cheerful and friendly manner would almost restore me. Air and exercise are his theme; them he recommends as the best physic for me, and in all weathers. Come therefore, my dear, and take a little of this good physic with me, for you will find it beneficial as well as I; come and assist Mrs. Unwin in the re-establishment of your cousin's health. Air and exercise, and she and you together, will make me a perfect Sampson. You will have a good house over your head, comfortable apartments, obliging neighbours, good roads, a pleasant country, and in us your constant companions, two who will love you, and do already love you dearly, and with all our hearts. If you are in any danger of trouble, it is from myself, if my fits of dejection seize me; and as often as they do, you will be grieved for me; but perhaps by your assistance I shall be able to resist them better. If there is a creature under heaven, from whose co-operations with Mrs. Unwin I can reasonably expect such a blessing, that creature is yourself. I was not without such attacks when I lived in London, though at that time they were less oppressive, but in your company I was never unhappy a whole day in all my life.

Of how much importance is an author to himself! I return to that abominable specimen again, just to notice Maty's impatient censure of the repetition that you mention. I mean of the word *hand*. In the original there is not a repetition of it. But to repeat a word in that manner, and on such an occasion, is by no means what he calls it, a *modern* invention. In Homer I could show him many such, and in Virgil they abound. Colman, who, in his judgment of classical matters, is inferior to none, says, '*I know not why Maty objects to this expression.*' I could easily change it. But the case standing thus, I know not whether my proud stomach will condescend so low. I rather feel disinclined to it.

One evening last week, Mrs. Unwin and I took our walk to Weston, and as we were returning through the grove opposite to the house, the Throckmortons presented themselves at the door. They are owners of a house at Weston, at present

empty. It is a very good one, infinitely superior to ours. When we drank chocolate with them, they both expressed their ardent desire that we would take it, wishing to have us for nearer neighbours. If you, my cousin, were not so well provided for as you are, and at our very elbow, I verily believe I should have mustered up all my rhetoric to recommend it to you. You might have it for ever without danger of ejectment, whereas your possession of the vicarage depends on the life of the vicar, who is eighty-six. The environs are most beautiful, and the village itself one of the prettiest I ever saw. Add to this, you would step immediately into Mr. Throckmorton's pleasure ground, where you would not soil your slipper even in winter. A most unfortunate mistake was made by that gentleman's bailiff in his absence. Just before he left Weston last year for the winter, he gave him orders to cut short the tops of the flowering shrubs, that lined a serpentine walk in a delightful grove, celebrated in my poetship in a little piece that you remember was called the Shrubbery. The dunce, misapprehending the order, cut down and fagoted up the whole grove, leaving neither tree, bush, nor twig; nothing but stumps about as high as my uncle. Mr. T. told us that she never saw her husband so angry in her life. I judged indeed by his physiognomy, which has great sweetness in it, that he is very little addicted to that infernal passion. But had he cudgeled the man for his cruel blunder, and the havoc made in consequence of it, I could have excused him.

I felt myself really concerned for the Chancellor's illness, and from what I learned of it, both from the papers, and from General Cowper, concluded that he must die. I am accordingly delighted in the same proportion with the news of his recovery. May he live, and live to be still the support of government! If it shall be his good pleasure to render me personally any material service, I have no objection to it. But Heaven knows, that it is impossible for any living wight to bestow less thought on that subject than myself.—May God be ever with you, my beloved cousin!

W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

MY DEAREST COUSIN, *Olney, May* 15, 1786.

FROM this very morning I begin to date the last month of our long separation, and confidently and most comfortably hope that before the fifteenth of June shall present itself, we shall have seen each other. Is it not so? And will it not be one of the most extraordinary eras of my extraordinary life? A year ago, we neither corresponded, nor expected to meet in this world. But this world is a scene of marvellous events, many of them more marvellous than fiction itself would dare to hazard; and (blessed be God!) they are not all of the distressing kind. Now and then in the course of an existence, whose hue is for the most part sable, a day turns up that makes amends for many sighs, and many subjects of complaint. Such a day shall I account the day of your arrival at Olney.

Wherefore is it (canst thou tell me?) that together with all those delightful sensations, to which the sight of a long absent dear friend gives birth, there is a mixture of something painful; flutterings, and tumults, and I know not what accompaniments of our pleasure, that are in fact perfectly foreign from the occasion? Such I feel when I think of our meeting; and such I suppose feel you; and the nearer the crisis approaches, the more I am sensible of them. I know beforehand that they will increase with every turn of the wheels, that shall convey me to Newport, when I shall set out to meet you, and that when we actually meet, the pleasure, and this unaccountable pain together, will be as much as I shall be able to support. I am utterly at a loss for the cause, and can only resolve it into that appointment, by which it has been foreordained that all human delights shall be qualified and mingled with their contraries. For there is nothing formidable in you. To me at least there is nothing such, no, not even in your menaces, unless when you threaten me to write no more. Nay, I verily believe, did I not know you to be what you are, and had less affection for you than I have, I should have fewer of these emotions, of which I would have none, if I could help it. But a fig for them all! Let us resolve to combat with, and to conquer them. They are dreams. They are illusions of the judgment. Some enemy that hates the happiness of human kind, and is ever industrious to dash it, works them in us; and their being so perfectly unreasonable as they are is a proof of it. Nothing that is such can be the work of a good agent. This I know too by experience, that, like all other illusions, they exist only by force of imagination, are indebted for their prevalence to the absence of their object, and in a few moments after its appearance cease. So then this a settled point, and the case stands thus. You will tremble as you draw near to Newport, and so shall I. But we will both recollect that there is no reason why we should, and this recollection will at least have some little effect in our favour. We will likewise both take the comfort of what we know to be true, that the tumult will soon cease, and the pleasure long survive the pain, even as long as I trust we ourselves shall survive it.

What you say of Maty gives me all the consolation that you intended. We both think it highly probable that you suggest the true cause of his displeasure, when you suppose him mortified at not having had a part of the translation laid before

him, ere this specimen was published. The General was very much hurt, and calls his censure harsh and unreasonable. He likewise sent me a consolatory letter on the occasion, in which he took the kindest pains to heal the wound that he supposed I might have suffered. I am not naturally insensible, and the sensibilities that I had by nature have been wonderfully enhanced by a long series of shocks, given to a frame of nerves that was never very athletic. I feel accordingly, whether painful or pleasant, in the extreme; am easily elevated, and easily cast down. The frown of a critic freezes my poetical powers, and discourages me to a degree that makes me ashamed of my own weakness. Yet I presently recover my confidence again. The half of what you so kindly say in your last would at any time restore my spirits, and, being said by you, is infallible. I am not ashamed to confess, that having commenced an author, I am most abundantly desirous to succeed as such. *I have* (*what perhaps you little suspect me of*) *in my nature an infinite share of ambition.* But with it I have at the same time, as you well know, an equal share of diffidence. To this combination of opposite qualities it has been owing that, till lately, I stole through life without undertaking any thing, yet always wishing to distinguish myself. At last I ventured, ventured too in the only path that at so late a period was yet open to me; and am determined, if God have not determined otherwise, to work my way through the obscurity that has been so long my portion, into notice. Every thing therefore that seems to threaten this my favourite purpose with disappointment, affects me nearly. I suppose that all ambitious minds are in the same predicament. He who seeks distinction must be sensible of disapprobation, exactly in the same proportion as he desires applause. And now, my precious cousin, I have unfolded my heart to you in this particular, without a speck of dissimulation. Some people, and good people too, would blame me. But you will not; and they I think would blame without just cause. We certainly do not honour God when we bury, or when we neglect to improve, as far as we may, whatever talent he may have bestowed on us, whether it be little or much. In natural things, as well as in spiritual, it is a never-failing truth, that to him who *hath* (that is to him who occupies what he hath diligently, and so as to increase it) more shall be given. Set me down therefore, my dear, for an industrious rhymer, so long as I shall have the ability. For in this only way is it possible for me, so far as I can see, either to honour God, or to serve man, or even to serve myself.

I rejoice to hear that Mr. Throckmorton wishes to be on a more intimate footing. I am shy, and suspect that he is not very much otherwise; and the consequence has been that we have mutually wished an acquaintance without being able to accomplish it. Blessings on you for the hint that you dropped on the subject of the house at Weston! For the burthen of my song is—'Since we have met once again, let us never be separated, as we have been, more.' W. C.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Olney, May* 20, 1786.

About three weeks since I met your sister Chester at Mr. Throckmorton's, and from her learned that you are at Blithfield, and in health. Upon the encouragement of this information it is that I write now; I should not otherwise have known with certainty where to find you, or have been equally free from the fear of unseasonable intrusion. May God be with you, my friend, and give you a just measure of submission to his will! the most effectual of all remedies for the evils of this changing scene. I doubt not that he has granted you this blessing already, and may he still continue it!

Now I will talk a little about myself. For except myself, living in this *Terrarum angulo*, what can I have to talk about? In a scene of perfect tranquillity, and the profoundest silence, I am kicking up the dust of heroic narrative, and besieging Troy again. I told you that I had almost finished the translation of the Iliad, and I verily thought so. But I was never more mistaken. By the time when I had reached the end of the poem, the first book of my version was a twelvemonth old. When I came to consider it after having laid it by so long, it did not satisfy me. I set myself to mend it, and I did so. But still it appeared to me improveable, and that nothing would so effectually secure that point as to give the whole book a new translation. With the exception of very few lines I have so done, and was never in my life so convinced of the soundness of Horace's advice to publish nothing in haste; so much advantage have I derived from doing that twice which I thought I had accomplished notably at once. He indeed recommends nine years' imprisonment of your verses before you send them abroad; but the ninth part of that time is I believe as much as there is need of to open a man's eyes upon his own defects, and to secure him from the danger of premature self-approbation. Neither ought it to be forgotten that nine years make so wide an interval between the cup and the lip, that a thousand things may fall out between. New engagements may occur, which may make the finishing of that which a poet has begun, impossible. In nine years he may rise into a situation, or he may sink into one highly incompatible with his purpose. His con-

stitution may break in nine years, and sickness may disqualify him for improving what he enterprised in the days of health. His inclination may change, and he may find some other employment more agreeable, or another poet may enter upon the same work, and get the start of him. Therefore, my friend Horace, though I acknowledge your principle to be good, I must confess that I think the practice you would ground upon it carried to an extreme. The rigour that I exercised upon the first book, I intend to exercise upon all that follow, and have now actually advanced into the middle of the seventh, no where admitting more than one line in fifty of the first translation. You must not imagine that I had been careless and hasty in the first instance. In truth I had not; but in rendering so excellent a poet as Homer into our language, there are so many points to be attended to both in respect to language and numbers, that a first attempt must be fortunate indeed if it does not call aloud for a second. You saw the specimen, and you saw (I am sure) one great fault in it; I mean the harshness of some of the elisions. I did not altogether take the blame of these to myself, for into some of them I was actually driven and hunted by a series of reiterated objections made by a critical friend, whose scruples and delicacies teazed me out of all my patience. But no such monsters will be found in the volume.

Your brother Chester has furnished me with Barnes's Homer, from whose notes I collect here and there some useful information, and whose fair and legible type preserves me from the danger of being as blind as was my author. I saw a sister of yours at Mr. Throckmorton's, but I am not good at making myself heard across a large room, and therefore nothing passed between us. I felt however that she was my friend's sister, and I much esteemed her for your sake.

Ever yours, W. C.

P. S. The swan is called *argutus* (I suppose) *a non arguendo*, and *canorus a non canendo*. But whether he be dumb or vocal, more poetical than the eagle or less, it is no matter. A feather of either, in token of your approbation and esteem, will never, you may rest assured, be an offence to me.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Olney, May 25, 1786.

I have at length, my cousin, found my way into my summer abode. I believe that I described it to you some time since, and will therefore now leave it undescribed. I will only say that I am writing in a bandbox, situated, at least in my account, delightfully, because it has a window in one side that opens into that orchard, through which, as I am sitting here, I shall see you often pass, and which therefore I already prefer to all the orchards in the world. You do well to prepare me for all possible delays, because in this life all sorts of disappointments are possible, and I shall do well, if any such delay of your journey should happen, to practise that lesson of patience which you inculcate. But it is a lesson which, even with you for my teacher, I shall be slow to learn. Being sure however that you will not procrastinate without cause, I will make myself as easy as I can about it, and hope for the best. To convince you how much I am under discipline, and good advice, I will lay aside a favourite measure, influenced in doing so by nothing but the good sense of your contrary opinion. I had set my heart on meeting you at Newport. In my haste to see you once again, I was willing to overlook many awkwardnesses I could not but foresee would attend it. I put them aside so long as I only foresaw them myself, but since I find that you foresee them too, I can no longer deal so slightly with them. It is therefore determined that we meet at Olney. Much I shall feel, but I will not die if I can help it, and I beg that you will take all possible care to outlive it likewise, for I know what it is to be balked in the moment of acquisition, and should be loath to know it again.

Last Monday in the evening we walked to Weston, according to our usual custom. It happened, owing to a mistake of time, that we set out half an hour sooner than usual. This mistake we discovered while we were in the wilderness. So, finding that we had time before us, as they say, Mrs. Unwin proposed that we should go into the village, and take a view of the house that I had just mentioned to you. We did so, and found it such a one as in most respects would suit you well. But Moses Brown, our vicar, who, as I told you, is in his eighty-sixth year, is not bound to die for that reason. He said himself, when he was here last summer, that he should live ten years longer, and for aught that appears so he may. In which case, for the sake of its near neighbourhood to us, the vicarage has charms for me, that no other place can rival. But this and a thousand things more, shall be talked over when you come.

We have been industriously cultivating our acquaintance with our Weston neighbours since I wrote last, and they on their part have been equally diligent in the same cause. I have a notion that we shall all suit well. I see much in them both that I admire. You know perhaps that they are catholics.

It is a delightful bundle of praise, my cousin, that you have sent me. All jasmine and lavender. Whoever the lady is, she has evidently an

admirable pen, and a cultivated mind. If a person reads, it is no matter in what language, and if the mind be informed, it is no matter whether that mind belongs to a man or a woman. The taste and the judgment will receive the benefit alike in both. Long before the Task was published I made an experiment one day, being in a frolicksome mood, upon my friend. We were walking in the garden, and conversing on a subject similar to these lines—

> The few that pray at all, pray oft amiss,
> And seeking grace t' improve the present good,
> Would urge a wiser suit than asking more.

I repeated them, and said to him with an air of *nonchalance*, "Do you recollect those lines? I have seen them somewhere, where are they?" He put on a considering face, and after some deliberation replied—"O, I will tell you where they must be—in the Night Thoughts." I was glad my trial turned out so well, and did not undeceive him. I mention this occurrence only in confirmation of the letter-writer's opinion, but at the same time I do assure you, on the faith of an honest man, that I never in my life designed an imitation of Young, or of any other writer; for mimicry is my abhorrence, at least in poetry.

Assure yourself, my dearest cousin, that both for your sake, since you make a point of it, and for my own, I will be as philosophically careful as possible, that these fine nerves of mine shall not be beyond measure agitated when you arrive. In truth, there is much greater probability that they will be benefited, and greatly too. Joy of heart, from whatever occasion it may arise, is the best of all nervous medicines; and I should not wonder if such a turn given to my spirits should have even a lasting effect, of the most advantageous kind, upon them. You must not imagine neither, that I am on the whole in any great degree subject to nervous affections; occasionally I am, and have been these many years, much liable to dejection. But at intervals, and sometimes for an interval of weeks, no creature would suspect it. For I have not that which commonly is a symptom of such a case belonging to me: I mean extraordinary elevation in the absence of Mr. Bluedevil. When I am in the best health, my tide of animal sprightliness flows with great equality, so that I am never, at any time, exalted in proportion as I am sometimes depressed. My depression has a cause, and if that cause were to cease, I should be as cheerful thenceforth, and perhaps for ever, as any man need be. But, as I have often said, Mrs. Unwin shall be my expositor.

Adieu, my beloved cousin. God grant that our friendship which, while we could see each other, never suffered a moment's interruption, and which so long a separation has not in the least abated, may glow in us to our last hour, and be renewed in a better world, there to be perpetuated for ever.

For you must know, that I should not love you half so well, if I did not believe you would be my friend to eternity. There is not room enough for friendship to unfold itself in full bloom, in such a nook of life as this. Therefore I am, and must, and will be, Yours for ever, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Olney, May 29, 1784.

Thou dear, comfortable cousin, whose letters, among all that I receive, have this property peculiarly their own, that I expect them without trembling, and never find any thing that does not give me pleasure; for which therefore I would take nothing in exchange that the world could give me, save and except that for which I must exchange them soon (and happy shall I be to do so), your own company. That, indeed, is delayed a little too long; to my impatience at least it seems so, who find the spring, backward as it is, too forward because many of its beauties will have faded before you will have an opportunity to see them. We took our customary walk yesterday in the wilderness at Weston, and saw, with regret, the laburnums, syringas, and guelder-roses, some of them blown, and others just upon the point of blowing, and could not help observing—all these will be gone before Lady Hesketh comes. Still however there will be roses, and jasmine, and honeysuckle, and shady walks, and cool alcoves, and you will partake them with us. But I want you to have a share of every thing that is delightful here, and can not bear that the advance of the season should steal away a single pleasure before you can come to enjoy it.

Every day I think of you, and almost all the day long; I will venture to say, that even *you* were never so expected in your life. I called last week at the Quaker's to see the furniture of your bed, the fame of which had reached me. It is, I assure you, superb, of printed cotton, and the subject classical. Every morning you will open your eyes on Phæton kneeling to Apollo, and imploring his father to grant him the conduct of his chariot for a day. May your sleep be as sound as your bed will be sumptuous, and your nights at least will be well provided for.

I shall send up the sixth and seventh books of the Iliad shortly, and shall address them to you. You will forward them to the General. I long to show you my workshop, and to see you sitting on the opposite side of my table. We shall be as close packed as two wax figures in an old fashioned picture frame. I am writing in it now. It is the place in which I fabricate all my verse in

summer time. I rose an hour sooner than usual, this morning, that I might finish my sheet before breakfast, for I must write this day to the General.

The grass under my windows is all bespangled with dewdrops, and the birds are singing in the apple trees, among the blossoms. Never poet had a more commodious oratory in which to invoke his muse.

I have made your heart ache too often, my poor dear cousin, with talking about my fits of dejection. Something has happened that has led me to the subject, or I would have mentioned them more sparingly. Do not suppose, or suspect that I treat you with reserve; there is nothing in which I am concerned that you shall not be made acquainted with. But the tale is too long for a letter. I will only add for your present satisfaction, that the cause is not exterior, that it is not within the reach of human aid, and that yet I have a hope myself, and Mrs. Unwin a strong persuasion of its removal. I am indeed even now, and have been for a considerable time, sensible of a change for the better, and expect, with good reason, a comfortable lift from you. Guess then, my beloved cousin, with what wishes I look forward to the time of your arrival, from whose coming I promise myself not only pleasure, but peace of mind, at least an additional share of it. At present it is an uncertain and transient guest with me, but the joy with which I shall see and converse with you at Olney, may perhaps make it an abiding one. W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Olney, June 4 and 5, 1786.

Ah! my cousin, you begin already to fear and quake. What a hero am I, compared with you. I have no fears of *you*. On the contrary am as bold as a lion. I wish that your carriage were even now at the door. You should soon see with how much courage I would face you. But what cause have you for fear? Am I not your cousin, with whom you have wandered in the fields of Freemantle, and at Bevis's Mount? who used to read to you, laugh with you, till our sides have ached, at any thing, or nothing? And am I in these respects at all altered? You will not find me so; but just as ready to laugh, and to wander, as you ever knew me. A cloud perhaps may come over me now and then, for a few hours, but from clouds I was never exempted. And are not you the identical cousin with whom I have performed all these feats? The very Harriet whom I saw, for the first time, at De Grey's, in Norfolk-street? (It was on a Sunday, when you came with my uncle and aunt to drink tea there, and I had dined there, and was just going back to Westminster.) If these things are so, and I am sure that you can not gainsay a syllable of them all, then this consequence follows; that I do not promise myself more pleasure from your company than I shall be sure to find. Then you are my cousin, in whom I always delighted, and in whom I doubt not that I shall delight even to my latest hour. But this wicked coach-maker has sunk my spirits. What a miserable thing it is to depend, in any degree, for the accomplishment of a wish, and that wish so fervent, on the punctuality of a creature who I suppose was never punctual in his life! Do tell him, my dear, in order to quicken him, that if he performs his promise, he shall make my coach, when I want one, and that if he performs it not, I will most assuredly employ some other man.

The Throckmortons sent a note to invite us to dinner—we went, and a very agreeable day we had. They made no fuss with us, which I was heartily glad to see, for where I give trouble I am sure that I can not be welcome. Themselves, and their chaplain, and we, were all the party. After dinner we had much cheerful and pleasant talk, the particulars of which might not perhaps be so entertaining upon paper, therefore all but one I will omit, and that I will mention only because it will of itself be sufficient to give you an insight into their opinion on a very important subject—their own religion. I happened to say that in all professions and trades mankind affected an air of mystery. Physicians, I observed, in particular, were objects of that remark, who persist in prescribing in Latin, many times no doubt to the hazard of a patient's life, through the ignorance of an apothecary. Mr. Throckmorton assented to what I said, and turning to his chaplain, to my infinite surprise observed to him, "*That is just as absurd as our praying in Latin.*" I could have hugged him for his liberality, and freedom from bigotry, but thought it rather more decent to let the matter pass without any visible notice. I therefore heard it with pleasure, and kept my pleasure to myself. The two ladies in the mean time were tête-á-tête in the drawing-room. Their conversation turned principally (as I afterwards learned from Mrs. Unwin) on a most delightful topic, viz. myself. In the first place, Mrs. Throckmorton admired my book, from which she quoted by heart more than I could repeat, though I so lately wrote it.

In short, my dear, I can not proceed to relate what she said of the book, and the book's author, for that abominable modesty that I can not even yet get rid of. Let it suffice to say that you, who are disposed to love every body who speaks kindly of your cousin, will certainly love Mrs. Throckmorton, when you shall be told what she said of him, and that you *will* be told is equally certain,

because it depends on Mrs. Unwin, who will tell you many a good long story for me, that I am not able to tell for myself. I am however not at all in arrear to our neighbours in the matter of admiration and esteem, but the more I know them, the more I like them, and have nearly an affection for them both. I am delighted that the Task has so large a share of the approbation of your sensible Suffolk friend.

I received yesterday from the General another letter of T. S. An unknown auxiliary having started up in my behalf, I believe I shall leave the business of answering to him, having no leisure myself for controversy. He lies very open to a very effectual reply.

My dearest cousin adieu! I hope to write to you but once more before we meet. But oh! this coachmaker, and oh! this holyday week!

Yours, with impatient desire to see you,
W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Olney, June* 9, 1784.

The little time that I can devote to any other purpose than that of poetry is, as you may suppose, stolen. Homer is urgent. Much is done, but much remains undone, and no schoolboy is more attentive to the performance of his daily task than I am. You will therefore excuse me if at present I am both unfrequent and short.

The paper tells me that the Chancellor has elapsed, and I am truly sorry to hear it. The first attack was dangerous, but a second must be more formidable still. It is not probable that I should ever hear from him again if he survive; yet of the much that I should have felt for him, had our connexion never been interrupted, I still feel much. Every body will feel the loss of a man whose abilities have made him of such general importance.

I correspond again with Colman, and upon the most friendly footing, and find in his instance, and in some others, that an intimate intercourse, which had been only casually suspended, not forfeited on either side by outrage, is capable not only of revival, but of improvement.

I had a letter some time since from your sister Fanny, that gave me great pleasure. Such notices from old friends are always pleasant, and of such pleasures I had received many lately. They refresh the remembrance of early days, and make me young again. The noble institution of the Nonsense Club will be forgotten, when we are gone who composed it; but I often think of your most heroic line, written at one of our meetings, and especially think of it when I am translating Homer—

"Te whom replied the Devil yard-long-tailed."

There never was any thing more truly Grecian than that triple epithet, and were it possible to introduce it into either Iliad or Odyssey, I should certainly steal it. I am now flushed with expectation of Lady Hesketh, who spends the summer with us. We hope to see her next week. We have found admirable lodgings both for her and suite, and a Quaker in this town, still more admirable than they, who, as if he loved her as much as I do, furnishes them for her, with real elegance. W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

Olney, June 19, 1784.

My dear cousin's arrival has, as it could not fail to do, made us happier than we ever were at Olney. Her great kindness in giving us her company is a cordial that I shall feel the effect of, not only while she is here but while I live.

Olney will not be much longer the place of our habitation. At a village two miles distant we have hired a house of Mr. Throckmorton, a much better than we occupy at present, and yet not more expensive. It is situated very near to our most agreeable landlord, and his agreeable pleasure grounds. In him, and in his wife, we shall find such companions as will always make the time pass pleasantly while they are in the country, and his grounds will afford us good air, and good walking room in the winter; two advantages which we have not enjoyed at Olney, where I have no neighbour with whom I can converse, and where, seven months in the year, I have been imprisoned by dirty and impassable ways, till both my health and Mrs. Unwin's have suffered materially.

Homer is ever importunate, and will not suffer me to spend half the time with my distant friends that I would gladly give them. W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR WILLIAM, *Olney, July* 3, 1784.

After a long silence I begin again. A day given to my friends, is a day taken from Homer, but to such an interruption, now and then occurring, I have no objection. Lady Hesketh is, as you observe, arrived, and has been with us near a fortnight. She pleases every body, and is pleased in her turn with every thing she finds at Olney; is always cheerful and sweet-tempered, and knows no pleasure equal to that of communicating pleasure to us and to all around her. This disposition in her is the more comfortable, because it is not the humour of the day, a sudden flash of benevolence and good spirits, occasioned merely by

a change of scene, but it is her natural turn, and has governed all her conduct ever since I knew her first. We are consequently happy in her society, and shall be happier still to have you to partake with us in our joy. I am fond of the sound of bells, but was never more pleased with those of Olney than when they rang her into her new habitation. It is a compliment that our performers upon those instruments have never paid to any other personage (Lord Dartmouth excepted) since we knew the town. In short, she is, as she ever was, my pride and my joy, and I am delighted with every thing that means to do her honour. Her first appearance was too much for me; my spirits, instead of being gently raised, as I had inadvertently supposed they would be, broke down with me under the pressure of too much joy, and left me flat, or rather melancholy, throughout the day, to a degree that was mortifying to myself, and alarming to her. But I have made amends for this failure since, and in point of cheerfulness have far exceeded her expectations, for she knew that sable had been my suit for many years.

And now I shall communicate news that will give you pleasure. When you first contemplated the front of our abode, you were shocked. In your eyes it had the appearance of a prison, and you sighed at the thought that your mother lived in it. Your view of it was not only just, but prophetic. It had not only the aspect of a place built for the purposes of incarceration, but has actually served that purpose through a long, long period, and we have been the prisoners. But a gaol-delivery is at hand. The bolts and bars are to be loosed, and we shall escape. A very different mansion, both in point of appearance and accommodation, expects us, and the expense of living in it not greater than we are subjected to in this. It is situated at Weston, one of the prettiest villages in England, and belongs to Mr. Throckmorton. We all three dine with him today by invitation, and shall survey it in the afternoon, point out the necessary repairs, and finally adjust the treaty. I have my cousin's promise that she will never let another year pass without a visit to us; and the house is large enough to take us, and her suite, and her also, with as many of hers as she shall choose to bring. The change will I hope prove advantageous both to your mother and me in all respects. Here we have no neighbourhood, there we shall have most agreeable neighbours in the Throckmortons. Here we have a bad air in winter, impregnated with the fishy smelling fumes of the marsh miasma; there we shall breathe in an atmosphere untainted. Here we are confined from September to March, and sometimes longer; there we shall be upon the very verge of pleasure-grounds in which we can always ramble, and shall not wade through almost impassable dirt to get at them. Both your mother's constitution and mine have suffered materially by such close and long confinement, and it is high time, unless we intend to retreat into the grave, that we should seek out a more wholesome residence. So far is well, the rest is left to Heaven.

I have hardly left myself room for an answer to your queries concerning my friend John, and his studies. I should recommend the civil war of Cæsar, because he wrote it, who ranks I believe as the best writer, as well as soldier, of his day There are books (I know not what they are, but you do, and can easily find them) that will inform him clearly of both the civil and military management of the Romans, the several officers, I mean, in both departments; and what was the peculiar province of each. The study of some such book would I should think prove a good introduction to that of Livy, unless you have a Livy with notes to that effect. A want of intelligence in those points has heretofore made the Roman history very dark and difficult to me; therefore I thus advise. Yours ever, W. C.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

Olney, July 4, 1786.

I REJOICE, my dear friend, that you have at last received my proposals, and most cordially thank you for all your labours, in my service. I have friends in the world who, knowing that I am apt to be careless when left to myself, are determined to watch over me with a jealous eye upon this occasion. The consequence will be, that the work will be better executed, but more tardy in the production. To them I owe it, that my translation, as fast as it proceeds, passes under a revisal of a most accurate discerner of all blemishes. I know not whether I told you before, or now tell you for the first time, that I am in the hands of a very extraordinary person. He is intimate with my bookseller, and voluntarily offered his service. I was at first doubtful whether to accept it or not; but finding that my friends abovesaid were not to be satisfied on any other terms, though myself a perfect stranger to the man and his qualifications, except as he was recommended by Johnson, I at length consented, and since found great reason to rejoice that I did. I called him an extraordinary person, and such he is. For he is not only versed in Homer, and accurate in his knowledge of the Greek to a degree that entitles him to that appellation, but, though a foreigner, is a perfect master of our language, and has exquisite taste in English poetry. By his assistance I have improved many passages, supplied many oversights, and corrected many mis-

takes, such as will of course escape the most diligent and attentive labourer in such a work. I ought to add, because it affords the best assurance of his zeal and fidelity, that he does not toil for hire, nor will accept of any premium, but has entered on this business merely for his amusement. In the last instance my sheets will pass through the hands of our old schoolfellow Colman, who has engaged to correct the press, and make any little alterations that he may see expedient. With all this precaution, little as I intended it once, I am now well satisfied. Experience has convinced me that other eyes than my own are necessary, in order that so long and arduous a task may be finished as it ought, and may neither discredit me, nor mortify and disappoint my friends. You, who I know interest yourself much and deeply in my success, will I dare say be satisfied with it too. Pope had many aids, and he who follows Pope ought not to walk alone.

Though I announce myself by my very undertaking to be one of Homer's most enraptured admirers, I am not a blind one. Perhaps the speech of Achilles given in my specimen is, as you hint, rather too much in the moralizing strain, to suit so young a man, and of so much fire. But whether it be or not, in the course of the close application that I am forced to give to my author, I discover inadvertencies not a few; some perhaps that have escaped even the commentators themselves; or perhaps in the enthusiasm of their idolatry, they resolved that they should pass for beauties. Homer however, say what they will, was man, and in all the works of man, especially in a work of such length and variety, many things will of necessity occur, that might have been better. Pope and Addison had a Dennis; and Dennis, if I mistake not, held up as he has been to scorn and detestation, was a sensible fellow, and passed some censures upon both those writers that, had they been less just, would have hurt them less. Homer had his Zoilus; and perhaps if we knew all that Zoilus said, we should be forced to acknowledge that sometimes at least he had reason on his side. But it is dangerous to find any fault at all with what the world is determined to esteem faultless.

I rejoice, my dear friend, that you enjoy some composure, and cheerfulness of spirits: may God preserve and increase to you so great a blessing!

I am affectionately and truly yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *August* 24, 1786.

I CATCH a minute by the tail and hold it fast, while I write to you. The moment it is fled I must go to breakfast. I am still occupied in refining and polishing, and shall this morning give the finishing hand to the seventh book. Fuseli does me the honour to say that the most difficult, and most interesting parts of the poem, are admirably rendered. But because he did not express himself equally pleased with the more pedestrian parts of it, my labour therefore has been principally given to the dignification of them; not but that I have retouched considerably, and made better still the best. In short I hope to make it all of a piece, and shall exert myself to the utmost to secure that desirable point. A storyteller, so very circumstantial as Homer, must of necessity present us often with much matter in itself capable of no other embellishment than purity of diction, and harmony of versification, can give to it. *Hic labor, hoc opus est.* For our language, unless it be very severely chastised, has not the terseness, nor our measure the music of the Greek. But I shall not fail through want of industry.

We are likely to be very happy in our connexion with the Throckmortons. His reserve and mine wear off; and he talks with great pleasure of the comfort that he proposes to himself from our winter-evening conversations. His purpose seems to be, that we should spend them alternately with each other. Lady Hesketh transcribes for me at present. When she is gone, Mrs. Throckmorton takes up that business, and will be my lady of the ink-bottle for the rest of the winter. She solicited herself that office.

Believe me,

My dear William, truly yours, W. C.

Mr. Throckmorton will (I doubt not) procure Petre's name, if he can, without any hint from me. He could not interest himself more in my success, than he seems to do. Could he get the pope to subscribe, I should have him; and should be glad of him and the whole conclave.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

YOU are my mahogany box, with a slip in the lid of it, to which I commit my productions of the lyric kind, in perfect confidence that they are safe, and will go no farther. All who are attached to the jingling art have this peculiarity, that they would find no pleasure in the exercise, had they not one friend at least to whom they might publish what they have composed. If you approve my Latin, and your wife and sister my English, this, together with the approbation of your mother, is fame enough for me.

He who can not look forward with comfort, must find what comfort he can in looking backward. Upon this principle, I the other day sent my imagination upon a trip thirty years behind

me. She was very obedient, and very swift of foot, presently performed her journey, and at last set me down in the sixth form at Westminster. I fancied myself once more a school-boy, a period of life in which, if I had never tasted true happiness, I was at least equally unacquainted with its contrary. No manufacturer of waking dreams ever succeeded better in his employment than I do. I can weave such a piece of tapestry in a few minutes, as not only has all the charms of reality, but is embellished also with a variety of beauties which, though they never existed, are more captivating than any that ever did—accordingly I was a schoolboy in high favour with the master, received a silver groat for my exercise, and had the pleasure of seeing it sent from form to form, for the admiration of all who were able to understand it. Do you wish to see this highly applauded performance? It follows on the other side.

(*torn off.*)

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,

You are sometimes indebted to bad weather, but more frequently to a dejected state of mind, for my punctuality as a correspondent. This was the case when I composed that tragi-comic ditty for which you thank me; my spirits were exceeding low, and having no fool or jester at hand, I resolved to be my own. The end was answered; I laughed myself, and I made you laugh. Sometimes I pour out my thoughts in a mournful strain, but those sable effusions your mother will not suffer me to send you, being resolved that nobody shall share with me the burthen of my melancholy but herself. In general you may suppose that I am remarkably sad when I seem remarkably merry. The effort we make to get rid of a load is usually violent in proportion to the weight of it. I have seen at Sadler's Wells a tight little fellow dancing with a fat man upon his shoulders; to those who looked at him, he seemed insensible of the incumbrance, but if a physician had felt his pulse, when the feat was over, I suppose he would have found the effect of it there. Perhaps you remember the undertakers' dance in the rehearsal, which they perform in crape hat-bands and black cloaks, to the tune of "Hob or Nob," one of the sprightliest airs in the world. Such is my fiddling, and such is my dancing; but they serve a purpose which at some certain times could not be so effectually promoted by any thing else.

I have endeavoured to comply with your request, though I am not good at writing upon a given subject. Your mother however comforts me by her approbation, and I steer myself in all that I produce by her judgment. If she does not understand me at the first reading, I am sure the lines are obscure, and always alter them; if she laughs, I know it is not without reason; and if she says, "that's well, it will do," I have no fear lest any body else should find fault with it. She is my lord chamberlain who licenses all I write.*

If you like it, use it; if not, you know the remedy. It is serious, yet epigrammatic—like a bishop at a ball.

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I am sensibly mortified at finding myself obliged to disappoint you; but though I have had many thoughts upon the subject you propose to my consideration, I have had none that have been favourable to the undertaking. I applaud your purpose, for the sake of the principle from which it springs; but I look upon the evils you mean to animadvert upon, as too obstinate and inveterate ever to be expelled by the means you mention. The very persons to whom you would address your remonstrance, are themselves sufficiently aware of their enormity: years ago, to my knowledge, they were frequently the topics of conversation at polite tables; they have been frequently mentioned in both houses of parliament; and I suppose there is hardly a member of either, who would not immediately assent to the necessity of reformation, were it proposed to him in a reasonable way. But there it stops; and there it will for ever stop till the majority are animated with a zeal in which they are at present deplorably defective. A religious man is unfeignedly shocked, when he reflects upon the prevalence of such crimes; a moral man must needs be so in a degree, and will affect to be much more so than he is. But how many do you suppose there are among our worthy representatives, that come under either of these descriptions? If all were such, yet to new model the police of the country, which must be done in order to make even unavoidable perjury less frequent, were a task they would hardly undertake, on account of the great difficulty that would attend it. Government is too much interested in the consumption of malt liquor, to reduce the number of venders. Such plausible pleas may be offered in defence of travelling on Sundays, especially by the trading part of the world, as the whole bench of bishops would find it difficult to overrule. And with respect to the violation of oaths, till a certain name is more generally respected than it is at present, however such persons as yourself may be grieved at it, the legislature are never likely to lay

* The verses to Miss C—— on her birth-day, (vide Poems) were inserted here.

it to heart. I do not mean, nor would by any means attempt to discourage you in so laudable an enterprise; but such is the light in which it appears to me, that I do not feel the least spark of courage qualifying or prompting me to embark in it myself. An exhortation therefore written by me, by hopeless, desponding me, would be flat, insipid, and uninteresting, and disgrace the cause instead of serving it. If after what I have said, however you still retain the same sentiments, *Macte esto virtute tuâ*, there is nobody better qualified than yourself, and may your success prove that I despaired of it without a reason.

Adieu, my dear friend, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I WRITE under the impression of a difficulty not easily surmounted, the want of something to say. Letter-spinning is generally more entertaining to the writer than the reader; for your sake therefore I would avoid it, but a dearth of materials is very apt to betray one into a trifling strain, in spite of all our endeavours to be serious.

I left off on Saturday, this present being Monday morning, and I renew the attempt, in hopes that I may possibly catch some subject by the end, and be more successful.

> So have I seen the maids in vain
> Tumble and tease a tangled skein.
> They bite the lip, they scratch the head,
> And cry—'the deuce is in the thread!'
> They torture it, and jerk it round,
> Till the right end at last is found,
> Then wind, and wind, and wind away,
> And what was work is changed to play.

When I wrote the two first lines, I thought I had engaged in a hazardous enterprise; for, thought I, should my poetical vein be as dry as my prosaic, I shall spoil the sheet, and send nothing at all; for I could on no account endure the thought of beginning again. But I think I have succeeded to admiration, and am willing to flatter myself that I have seen even a worse impromptu in the newspapers.

Though we live in a nook, and the world is quite unconscious that there are any such beings in it as ourselves, yet we are not unconcerned about what passes in it. The present awful crisis, big with the fate of England, engages much of our attention. The action is probably over by this time, and though we know it not, the grand question is decided, whether the war shall roar in our once peaceful fields, or whether we shall still only hear of it at a distance. I can compare the nation to no similitude more apt than that of an ancient castle that had been for days assaulted by the battering ram. It was long before the stroke of that engine made any sensible impression, but the continual repetition at length communicated a slight tremor to the wall, the next, and the next, and the next blow increased it. Another shock puts the whole mass in motion, from the top to the foundation: it bends forward, and is every moment driven farther from the perpendicular, till at last the decisive blow is given, and down it comes. Every million that has been raised within the last century has had an effect upon the constitution like that of a blow from the aforesaid ram upon the aforesaid wall. The impulse becomes more and more important, and the impression it makes is continually augmented; unless therefore something extraordinary intervenes to prevent it—you will find the consequence at the end of my simile.

Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

As I promised you verse, if you would send me a frank, I am not willing to return the cover without some, though I think I have already wearied you by the prolixity of my prose.*

I must refer you to those unaccountable gaddings and caprices of the human mind, for the cause of this production; for in general I believe there is no man who has less to do with the ladies' cheeks than I have. I suppose it would be best to antedate it, and to imagine that it was written twenty years ago, for my mind was never more in a trifling butterfly trim than when I composed it, even in the earliest parts of my life. And what is worse than all this, I have translated it into Latin. But that some other time. Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,

How apt we are to deceive ourselves where self is in question: you say I am in your debt, and I accounted you in mine: a mistake to which you must attribute my arrears, if indeed I owe you any, for I am not backward to write where the uppermost thought is welcome.

I am obliged to you for all the books you have occasionally furnished me with: I did not indeed read many of Johnson's Classics—those of established reputation are so fresh in my memory, though many years have intervened since I made them my companions, that it was like reading what I read yesterday over again: and as to the minor Classics, I did not think them worth reading at all—I tasted most of them, and did not like them

* Here followed his poem, the Lily and the Rose.

—it is a great thing to be indeed a poet, and does not happen to more than one man in a century. Churchill, the great Churchill, deserved the name of poet—I have read him twice, and some of his pieces three times over, and the last time with more pleasure than the first. The pitiful scribbler of his life seems to have undertaken that task, for which he was entirely unqualified, merely because it afforded him an opportunity to traduce him. He has inserted in it but one anecdote of consequence, for which he refers you to a novel, and introduces the story with doubts about the truth of it. But his barrenness as a biographer I could forgive if the simpleton had not thought himself a judge of his writings, and, under the erroneous influence of that thought, informed his reader that Gotham, Independence, and the Times, were catch-pennies. Gotham, unless I am a greater blockhead than he, which I am far from believing, is a noble and beautiful poem, and a poem with which I make no doubt the author took as much pains as with any he ever wrote. Making allowance (and Dryden in his Absalom and Achitophel stands in need of the same indulgence) for an unwarrantable use of Scripture, it appears to me to be a masterly performance. Independence is a most animated piece, full of strength and spirit, and marked with that bold masculine character which I think is the great peculiarity of this writer. And the Times (except that the subject is disgusting to the last degree) stands equally high in my opinion. He is indeed a careless writer for the most part; but where shall we find in any of those authors who finish their works with the exactness of a Flemish pencil, those bold and daring strokes of fancy, these numbers so hazardously ventured upon, and so happily finished, the matter so compressed, and yet so clear, and the colouring so sparingly laid on, and yet with such a beautiful effect? In short, it is not his least praise that he is never guilty of those faults as a writer which he lays to the charge of others. A proof that he did not judge by a borrowed standard, or from rules laid down by critics, but that he was qualified to do it by his own native powers, and his great superiority of genius. For he that wrote so much, and so fast, would through inadvertence and hurry unavoidably have departed from rules which he might have found in books, but his own truly poetical talent was a guide which could not suffer him to err. A race-horse is graceful in his swiftest pace, and never makes an awkward motion, though he is pushed to his utmost speed. A cart-horse might perhaps be taught to play tricks in the riding school, and might prance and curvet like his betters, but at some unlucky time would be sure to betray the baseness of his original. It is an affair of very little consequence perhaps to the well-being of mankind, but I can not help regretting that he died so soon. Those words of Virgil, upon the immature death of Marcellus, might serve for his epitaph.

"Ostendent terris hunc tantum fata, neque ultra
Esse sinent——."

Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,

I FIND the Register in all respects an entertaining medley, but especially in this, that it has brought to my view some long forgotten pieces of my own production. I mean by the way two or three. Those I have marked with my own initials, and you may be sure I found them peculiarly agreeable, as they had not only the grace of being mine, but that of novelty likewise to recommend them. It is at least twenty years since I saw them. You I think was never a dabbler in rhyme. I have been one ever since I was fourteen years of age, when I began with translating an elegy of Tibullus. I have no more right to the name of a poet, than a maker of mouse-traps has to that of an engineer, but my little exploits in this way have at times amused me so much, that I have often wished myself a good one. Such a talent in verse as mine is like a child's rattle, very entertaining to the trifler that uses it, and very disagreeable to all beside. But it has served to rid me of some melancholy moments, for I only take it up as a gentleman performer does his fiddle. I have this peculiarity belonging to me as a rhymist, that though I am charmed to a great degree with my own work, while it is on the anvil, I can seldom bear to look at it when it is once finished. The more I contemplate it, the more it loses of its value, till I am at last disgusted with it. I then throw it by, take it up again perhaps ten years after, and am as much delighted with it as at the first.

Few people have the art of being agreeable when they talk of themselves; if you are not weary therefore you pay me a high compliment.

I dare say Miss S——— was much diverted with the conjecture of her friends. The true key to the pleasure she found at Olney was plain enough to be seen, but they chose to overlook it. She brought with her a disposition to be pleased, which whoever does is sure to find a visit agreeable, because they make it so.

Yours, W. C.*

*This dateless letter, which is probably entitled to a very early place in this collection, was reserved to close the correspondence with Mr. Unwin, from the hope, that before the press advanced so far, the editor might recover those unknown verses of Cowper, to which the letter alludes, but all researches for this purpose have failed. *Hayley.*

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Olney, August* 31, 1786.

I BEGAN to fear for your health, and every day said to myself—I must write to Bagot soon, if it be only to ask him how he does—a measure that I should certainly have pursued long since had I been less absorbed in Homer than I am. But such are my engagements in that quarter, that they make me, I think, good for little else.

Many thanks, my friend, for the names that you have sent me. The Bagots will make a most conspicuous figure among my subscribers, and I shall not I hope soon forget my obligations to them.

The unacquaintedness of modern ears with the divine harmony of Milton's numbers, and the principles upon which he constructed them, is the cause of the quarrel that they have with elisions in blank verse. But where is the remedy? In vain should you or I, and a few hundreds more perhaps who have studied his versification, tell them of the superior majesty of it, and that for that majesty it is greatly indebted to those elisions. In their ears, they are discord and dissonance; they lengthen the line beyond its due limits, and are therefore not to be endured. There is a whimsical inconsistence in the judgment of modern readers in this particular. Ask them all round, whom do you account the best writer of blank verse? and they will reply to a man, Milton, to be sure; Milton against the field! Yet if a writer of the present day should construct his numbers exactly upon Milton's plan, not one in fifty of these professed admirers of Milton would endure him. The case standing thus, what is to be done? An author must either be contented to give disgust to the generality, or he must humour them by sinning against his own judgment. This latter course, so far as elisions are concerned, I have adopted as essential to my success. In every other respect I give as much variety in my measure as I can, I believe I may say as in ten syllables it is possible to give, shifting perpetually the pause and cadence, and accounting myself happy that modern refinement has not yet enacted laws against this also. If it had, I protest to you I would have dropped my design of translating Homer entirely; and with what an indignant stateliness of reluctance I make them the concession that I have mentioned, Mrs. Unwin can witness, who hears all my complaints upon the subject.

After having lived twenty years at Olney, we are on the point of leaving it, but shall not migrate far. We have taken a house in the village of Weston. Lady Hesketh is our good angel, by whose aid we are enabled to pass into a better air, and a more walkable country. The imprisonment that we have suffered here for so many winters, has hurt us both. That we may suffer it no longer, she stoops at Olney, lifts us from our swamp, and sets us down on the elevated grounds of Weston Underwood. There, my dear friend, I shall be happy to see you, and to thank you in person for all your kindness.

I do not wonder at the judgment that you form of ——— a foreigner; but you may assure yourself that, foreigner as he is, he has an exquisite taste in English verse. The man is all fire, and an enthusiast in the highest degree on the subject of Homer, and has given me more than once a jog, when I have been inclined to nap with my author. No cold water is to be feared from him that might abate my own fire, rather perhaps too much combustible.

Adieu! mon ami, yours faithfully, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

Olney, Oct. 6, 1786.

YOU have not heard I suppose that the ninth book of my translation is at the bottom of the Thames. But it is even so. A storm overtook it in its way to Kingston, and it sunk, together with the whole cargo of the boat in which it was a passenger. Not figuratively foreshowing, I hope, by its submersion, the fate of all the rest. My kind and generous cousin, who leaves nothing undone that she thinks can conduce to my comfort, encouragement, or convenience, is my transcriber also. *She* wrote the copy, and *she* will have to write it again———*Hers* therefore is the damage. I have a thousand reasons to lament that the time approaches when we must lose her. She has made a winterly summer a most delightful one, but the winter itself we must spend without her.

W. C.*

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

Weston Underwood, Nov. 17, 1786.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

THERE are some things that do not actually shorten the life of man, yet seem to do so, and frequent removals from place to place are of that number. For my own part at least I am apt to think, if I had been more stationary, I should seem to myself to have lived longer. My many changes of habitation have divided my time into many short periods, and when I look back upon them they appear only as the stages in a day's

* In this interval, viz. on the 15th of the following month, the day on which he completed his fifty fifth year (O. S.) Mr Cowper removed to Weston Underwood

journey, the first of which is at no very great distance from the last.

I lived longer at Olney than any where. There indeed I lived till mouldering walls and a tottering house warned me to depart. I have accordingly taken the hint, and two days since arrived, or rather took up my abode at Weston. You perhaps have never made the experiment, but I can assure you that the confusion which attends a transmigration of this kind is infinite, and has a terrible effect in deranging the intellects. I have been obliged to renounce my Homer on the occasion, and though not for many days, I yet feel as if study and meditation, so long my confirmed habits, were on a sudden become impracticable, and that I shall certainly find them so when I attempt them again. But in a scene so much quieter and pleasanter than that which I have just escaped from, in a house so much more commodious, and with furniture about me so much more to my taste, I shall hope to recover my literary tendency again, when once the bustle of the occasion shall have subsided.

How glad I should be to receive you under a roof, where you would find me so much more comfortably accommodated than at Olney! I know vour warmth of heart towards me, and am sure hat you would rejoice in my joy. At present indeed I have not had time for much self-gratulation, but have every reason to hope, nevertheless, that in due time I shall derive considerable advantage both in health and spirits, from the alteration made in my *whereabout*.

I have now the the twelfth book of the Iliad in hand, having settled the eleven first books finally, as I think, or nearly so. The winter is the time when I make the greatest riddance.

Adieu my dear Walter. Let me hear from you, and Believe me ever yours, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Weston Lodge, Nov. 26, 1786.

It is my birthday, my beloved cousin, and I determine to employ a part of it, that it may not be destitute of festivity, in writing to you. The dark thick fog that has obscured it, would have been a burthen to me at Olney, but here I have hardly attended to it, the neatness and snugness of our abode compensate all the dreariness of the season, and whether the ways are wet or dry, our house at least is always warm and commodious. O! for you, my cousin, to partake these comforts with us! I will not begin already to tease you upon that subject, but Mrs. Unwin remembers to have heard from your own lips, that you hate London in the spring. Perhaps therefore by that time, you may be glad to escape from a scene which will be every day growing more disagreeable, that you may enjoy the comforts of the lodge. You well know that the best house has a desolate appearance unfurnished. This house accordingly, since it has been occupied by us and our *meubles*, is as much superior to what it was when you saw it, as you can imagine. The parlour is even elegant. When I say that the parlour is elegant, I do not mean to insinuate that the study is not so. It is neat, warm, and silent, and a much better study than I deserve, if I do not produce in it an incomparable translation of Homer. I think every day of those lines of Milton, and congratulate myself on having obtained, before I am quite superannuated, what he seems not to have hoped for sooner.

> "And may at length my weary age
> Find out the peaceful hermitage!"

For if it is not an hermitage, at least it is a much better thing, and you must always understand, my dear, that when poets talk of cottages, hermitages, and such like things, they mean a house with six sashes in front, two comfortable parlours, a smart staircase, and three bed chambers of convenient dimensions; in short, exactly such a house as this.

The Throckmortons continue the most obliging neighbours in the world. One morning last week, they both went with me to the cliffs—a scene, my dear, in which you would delight beyond measure, but which you can not visit except in the spring or autumn. The heat of summer and the clinging dirt of winter would destroy you. What is called the cliff, is no cliff, nor at all like one, but a beautiful terrace, sloping gently down to the Ouse, and from the brow of which, though not lofty, you have a view of such a valley as makes that which you see from the hills near Olney, and which I have had the honour to celebrate, an affair of no consideration.

Wintry as the weather is, do not suspect that it confines me. I ramble daily, and every day change my ramble. Wherever I go, I find short grass under my feet, and when I have travelled perhaps five miles, come home with shoes not at all too dirty for a drawing room. I was pacing yesterday under the elms, that surrounds the field in which stands the great alcove, when lifting my eyes I saw two black genteel figures bolt through a hedge into the path where I was walking. You guess already who they were, and that they could be nobody but our neighbours. They had seen me from a hill at a distance, and had traversed a large turnip-field to get at me. You see therefore my dear, that I am in some request. Alas! in too much request with some people. The verses of Cadwallader have found me at last.

I am charmed with your account of our little

cousin* at Kensington. If the world does not spoil him hereafter, he will be a valuable man.

Good night, and may God bless thee, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, Dec. 4, 1786.

I sent you, my dear, a melancholy letter, and I do not know that I shall now send you one very unlike it. Not that any thing occurs in consequence of our late loss more afflictive than was to be expected, but the mind does not perfectly recover its tone after a shock like that which has been felt so lately. This I observe, that though my experience has long since taught me, that this world is a world of shadows, and that it is the more prudent, as well as the more Christian course to possess the comforts that we find in it, as if we possessed them not, it is no easy matter to reduce this doctrine into practice. We forget that that God who gave them, may, when he pleases, take them away; and that perhaps it may please him to take them at a time when we least expect, or are least disposed to part from them. Thus it has happened in the present case. There never was a moment in Unwin's life, when there seemed to be more urgent want of him than the moment in which he died. He had attained to an age when, if they are at any time useful, men become useful to their families, their friends, and the world. His parish began to feel, and to be sensible of the advantages of his ministry. The clergy around him were many of them awed by his example. His children were thriving under his own tuition and management, and his eldest boy is likely to feel his loss severely, being by his years in some respect qualified to understand the value of such a parent; by his literary proficiency too clever for a schoolboy, and too young at the same time for the university. The removal of a man in the prime of life of such a character, and with such connexions, seems to make a void in society that can never be filled. God seemed to have made him just what he was, that he might be a blessing to others, and when the influence of his character and abilities began to be felt, removed him. These are mysteries, my dear, that we can not contemplate without astonishment, but which will nevertheless be explained hereafter, and must in the mean time be revered in silence. It is well for his mother, that she has spent her life in the practice of an habitual acquiescence in the dispensations of Providence, else I know that this stroke would have been heavier, after all that she has suffered upon another account, than she could have borne. She derives, as she well may, great consolation from the thought that he lived the life, and died the death of a Christian. The consequence is, if possible, more unavoidable than the most mathematical conclusion, that therefore he is happy. So farewell my friend Unwin! The first man for whom I conceived a friendship after my removal from St. Alban's, and for whom I can not but still continue to feel a friendship, though I shall see thee with these eyes no more.

W. C.

* Lord Cowper.

TO ROBERT SMITH, ESQ.

Weston Underwood, near Olney,
Dec. 9, 1786.

My dear sir,

We have indeed suffered a great loss by the death of our friend Unwin; and the shock that attended it was the more severe, as till within a few hours of his decease there seemed to be no very alarming symptoms. All the account that we received from Mr. Henry Thornton, who acted like a true friend on the occasion, and with a tenderness toward all concerned, that does him great honour, encouraged our hopes of his recovery; and Mrs. Unwin herself found him on her arrival at Winchester so cheerful, and in appearance so likely to live, that her letter also seemed to promise us all that we could wish on the subject. But an unexpected turn in his distemper, which suddenly seized his bowels, dashed all our hopes, and deprived us almost immediately of a man whom we must ever regret. His mind having been from his infancy deeply tinctured with religious sentiments, he was always impressed with a sense of the importance of the great change of all; and on former occasions, when at any time he found himself indisposed, was consequently subject to distressing alarms and apprehensions. But in this last instance, his mind was from the first composed and easy; his fears were taken away, and succeeded by such a resignation as warrants us in saying, "that God made all his bed in his sickness." I believe it is always thus, where the heart, though upright toward God, as Unwin's assuredly was, is yet troubled with the fear of death. When death indeed comes, he is either welcome, or at least has lost his sting.

I have known many such instances, and his mother, from the moment that she learned with what tranquillity he was favoured in his illness, for that very reason expected that it would be his last. Yet not with so much certainty, but that the favourable accounts of him at length, in a great measure, superseded that persuasion.

She begs me to assure you, my dear sir, how sensible she is, as well as myself, of the kindness of your inquiries. She suffers this stroke, not with more patience than submission than I expected, for I never knew her hurried by any affliction into the

loss of either, but in appearance, at least, and at present, with less injury to her health than I apprehended. She observed to me, after reading your kind letter, that though it was a proof of the greatness of her loss, it yet afforded her pleasure, though a melancholy one, to see how much her son had been loved and valued by such a person as yourself.

Mrs. Unwin wrote to her daughter-in-law, to invite her and the family hither, hoping that a change of scene, and a situation so pleasant as this, may be of service to her, but we have not yet received her answer. I have good hope however that, great as her affliction must be, she will yet be able to support it, for she well knows whither to resort for consolation.

The virtues and amiable qualities of our friends are the things for which we most wish to keep them, but they are on the other hand the very things, that in particular ought to reconcile us to their departure. We find ourselves sometimes connected with, and engaged in affection too, to a person of whose readiness and fitness for another life we can not have the highest opinion. The death of such men has a bitterness in it, both to themselves and survivors, which, thank God! is not to be found in the death of Unwin.

I know, my dear sir, how much you valued him, and I know also how much he valued you. With respect to him, all is well; and of you, if I should survive you, which perhaps is not very probable, I shall say the same.

In the mean time, believe me with the warmest wishes for your health and happiness, and with Mrs. Unwin's affectionate respects,

Yours, my dear sir,
Most faithfully, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Weston, Dec. 9, 1786.

I am perfectly sure that you are mistaken, though I do not wonder at it, considering the singular nature of the event, in the judgment that you form of poor Unwin's death, as it affects the interest of his intended pupil. When a tutor was wanted for him, you sought out the wisest and best man for the office within the circle of your connexions. It pleased God to take him home to himself. Men eminently wise and good are very apt to die, because they are fit to do so. You found in Unwin a man worthy to succeed him; and He, in whose hands are the issues of life and death, seeing no doubt that Unwin was ripe for a removal into a better state, removed him also. The matter viewed in this light seems not so wonderful as to refuse all explanation, except such as in a melancholy moment you have given to it. And I am so convinced that the little boy's destiny had no influence at all in hastening the death of his tutors elect, that were it not impossible on more accounts than one that I should be able to serve him in that capacity, I would without the least fear of dying a moment the sooner, offer myself to that office; I would even do it, were I conscious of the same fitness for another and a better state, that I believe them to have been both endowed with. In that case, I perhaps might die too, but if I should, it would not be on account of that connexion. Neither, my dear, had your interference in the business any thing to do with the catastrophe. Your whole conduct in it must have been acceptable in the sight of God, as it was directed by principles of the purest benevolence.

I have not touched Homer to-day. Yesterday was one of my terrible seasons, and when I arose this morning I found that I had not sufficiently recovered myself to engage in such an occupation. Having letters to write, I the more willingly gave myself a dispensation.—Good night.

Yours ever, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

my dear friend, *Weston, Dec.* 9, 1786.

We had just begun to employ the pleasantness of our new situation, to find at least as much comfort in it as the season of the year would permit, when affliction found us out in our retreat, and the news reached us of the death of Mr. Unwin. He had taken a western tour with Mr. Henry Thornton, and in his return, at Winchester, was seized with a putrid fever, which sent him to his grave. He is gone to it, however, though young, as fit for it as age itself could have made him. Regretted indeed, and always to be regretted by those who knew him, for he had every thing that makes a man valuable both in his principles and in his manners, but leaving still this consolation to his surviving friends, that he was desirable in this world chiefly because he was so well prepared for a better.

I find myself here situated exactly to my mind. Weston is one of the prettiest villages in England, and the walks about it at all seasons of the year delightful. I know that you will rejoice with me in the change that we have made, and for which I am altogether indebted to Lady Hesketh. It is a change as great as (to compare metropolitan things with rural) from St. Giles's to Grosvenor-square. Our house is in all respects commodious, and in some degree elegant; and I can not give you a better idea of that which we have left, than by telling you the present candidates for it are a publican and a shoemaker.

W. C

TO LADY HESKETH.

Weston, Dec. 21, 1786.

Your welcome letter, my beloved cousin, which ought by the date to have arrived on Sunday, being by some untoward accident delayed, came not till yesterday. It came, however, and has relieved me from a thousand distressing apprehensions on your account.

The dew of your intelligence has refreshed my poetical laurels. A little praise now and then is very good for your hard-working poet, who is apt to grow languid, and perhaps careless without it. Praise I find affects us as money does. The more a man gets of it, with the more vigilance he watches over and preserves it. Such at least is its effect on me, and you may assure yourself that I will never lose a mite of it for want of care.

I have already invited the good Padre in general terms, and he shall positively dine here next week, whether he will or not. I do not at all suspect that his kindness to Protestants has any thing insidious in it, any more than I suspect that he transcribes Homer for me with a view for my conversion. He would find me a tough piece of business I can tell him; for when I had no religion at all, I had yet a terrible dread of the Pope. How much more now!

I should have sent you a longer letter, but was obliged to devote my last evening to the melancholy employment of composing a Latin inscription for the tomb-stone of poor William, two copies of which I wrote out and enclosed, one to Henry Thornton, and one to Mr. Newton. Homer stands by me biting his thumbs, and swears that if I do not leave off directly, he will choak me with bristly Greek, that shall stick in my throat for ever.

W. C.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

My dear friend, *Weston, Jan.* 3, 1787.

You wish to hear from me at any calm interval of epic frenzy. An interval presents itself, but whether calm or not, is perhaps doubtful. Is it possible for a man to be calm, who for three weeks past has been perpetually occupied in slaughter; letting out one man's bowels, smiting another through the gullet, transfixing the liver of another, and lodging an arrow in the buttock of a fourth? Read the thirteenth book of the Iliad, and you will find such amusing incidents as these the subject of it, the sole subject. In order to interest myself in it, and to catch the spirit of it, I had need discard all humanity. It is woful work; and were the best poet in the world to give us at this day such a list of killed and wounded, he would not escape universal censure, to the praise of a more enlightened age be it spoken. I have waded through much blood, and through much more I must wade before I shall have finished. I determine in the mean time to account it all very sublime, and for two reasons.—First, because, all the learned think so, and secondly, because I am to translate it. But were I an indifferent by-stander, perhaps I should venture to wish, that Homer had applied his wonderful powers to a less disgusting subject. He has in the Odyssey, and I long to get at it.

I have not the good fortune to meet with any of these fine things, that you say are printed in my praise. But I learn from certain advertisements in the Morning Herald, that I make a conspicuous figure in the entertainments of Free-Mason's Hall. I learn also that my volumes are out of print, and that a third edition is soon to be published. But if I am not gratified with the sight of odes composed to my honour and glory, I have at least been tickled with some *douceurs* of a very flattering nature by the post. A lady unknown addresses the best of men—an unknown gentleman has read my inimitable poems, and invites me to his seat in Hampshire—another incognito gives me hopes of a memorial in his garden, and a Welsh attorney sends me his verses to revise, and obligingly asks,

> "Say, shall my little bark attendant sail,
> Pursue the triumph, and partake the gale?'

If you find me a little vain hereafter, my friend, you must excuse it, in consideration of these powerful incentives, especially the latter; for surely the poet who can charm an attorney, especially a Welsh one, must be at least an Orpheus, if not something greater.

Mrs. Unwin is as much delighted as myself with our present situation. But it is a sort of April weather life that we lead in this world. A little sunshine is generally the prelude to a storm. Hardly had we begun to enjoy the change, when the death of her son cast a gloom upon every thing. He was a most exemplary man; of your order; learned, polite, and amiable. The father of lovely children, and the husband of a wife (very much like dear Mrs. Bagot) who adored him.

Adieu, my friend! Your affectionate W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, Jan. 8, 1787.

I have had a little nervous fever lately, my dear, that had somewhat abridged my sleep; and though I find myself better to-day than I have been since it seized me, yet I feel my head lightish, and not in the best order for writing. You will

find me therefore perhaps not only less alert in my manner than I usually am when my spirits are good, but rather shorter. I will however proceed to scribble till I find that it fatigues me, and then will do as I know you would bid me do were you here, shut up my desk, and take a walk.

The good General tells me that in the eight first books which I have sent him, he still finds alterations and amendments necessary, of which I myself am equally persuaded; and he asks my leave to lay them before an intimate friend of his, of whom he gives a character that bespeaks him highly deserving such a trust. To this I have no objection, desiring only to make the translation as perfect as I can make it. If God grant me life and health, I would spare no labour to secure that point. The general's letter is extremely kind, and both for manner and matter like all the rest of his dealings with his cousin the poet.

I had a letter also yesterday from Mr. Smith, member for Nottingham. Though we never saw each other, he writes to me in the most friendly terms, and interests himself much in my Homer, and in the success of my subscription. Speaking on this latter subject, he says that my poems are read by hundreds, who know nothing of my proposals, and makes no doubt that they would subscribe, if they did. I have myself always thought them imperfectly, or rather inefficiently announced.

I could pity the poor woman, who has been weak enough to claim my song. Such pilferings are sure to be detected. I wrote it, I know not how long, but I suppose four years ago. The rose in question was a rose given to Lady Austen by Mrs. Unwin, and the incident that suggested the subject occurred in the room in which you slept at the vicarage, which Lady Austen made her dining room. Some time since, Mr. Bull going to London, I gave him a copy of it, which he undertook to convey to Nichols, the printer of the Gentleman's Magazine. He showed it to Mrs. C———, who begged to copy it, and promised to send it to the printer's by her servant. Three or four months afterwards, and when I had concluded it was lost, I saw it in the Gentleman's Magazine, with my signature, W. C. Poor simpleton! She will find now perhaps that the rose had a thorn, and that she has pricked her fingers with it. Adieu! my beloved cousin.

W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Ledge, Jan. 18, 1787.

I HAVE been so much indisposed with the fever that I told you had seized me, my nights during the whole week may be said to have been almost sleepless. The consequence has been, that except the translation of about thirty lines at the conclusion of the thirteenth book, I have been forced to abandon Homer entirely. This was a sensible mortification to me, as you may suppose, and felt the more because, my spirits of course failing with my strength, I seemed to have peculiar need of my old amusement. It seemed hard therefore to be forced to resign it just when I wanted it most. But Homer's battles can not be fought by a man who does not sleep well, and who has not some little degree of animation in the day time. Last night, however, quite contrary to my expectations, the fever left me entirely, and I slept quietly, soundly, and long. If it please God that it return not, I shall soon find myself in a condition to proceed. I walk constantly, that is to say, Mrs. Unwin and I together; for at these times I keep her continually employed, and never suffer her to be absent from me many minutes. She gives me all her time, and all her attention, and forgets that there is another object in the world.

Mrs. Carter thinks on the subject of dreams as every body else does, that is to say, according to her own experience. She has had no extraordinary ones, and therefore accounts them only the ordinary operations of the fancy. Mine are of a texture that will not suffer me to ascribe them to so inadequate a cause, or to any cause but the operation of an exterior agency. I have a mind, my dear, (and to you I will venture to boast of it) as free from superstition as any man living, neither do I give heed to dreams in general as predictive, though particular dreams I believe to be so. Some very sensible persons, and I suppose Mrs. Carter among them, will acknowledge that in old times God spoke by dreams, but affirm with much boldness that he has since ceased to do so. If you ask them why? They answer, because he has now revealed his will in the Scripture, and there is no longer any need that he should instruct or admonish us by dreams. I grant that with respect to doctrines and precepts he has left us in want of nothing; but has he thereby precluded himself in any of the operations of his Providence? Surely not. It is perfectly a different consideration; and the same need that there ever was of his interference in this way, there is still, and ever must be, while man continues blind and fallible, and a creature beset with dangers which he can neither foresee nor obviate. His operations however of this kind are, I allow, very rare; and as to the generality of dreams, they are made of such stuff, and are in themselves so insignificant, that though I believe them all to be the manufacture of others, not our own, I account it not a farthing-matter who manufactures them. So much for dreams'

My fever is not yet gone, but sometimes seems

to leave me. It is altogether of the nervous kind, and attended, now and then, with much dejection.

A young gentleman called here yesterday, who came six miles out of his way to see me. He was on a journey to London from Glasgow, having just left the university there. He came I suppose partly to satisfy his own curiosity, but chiefly, as it seemed, to bring me the thanks of some of the Scotch professors for my two volumes. His name is Rose, an Englishman. Your spirits being good, you will derive more pleasure from this incident than I can at present, therefore I send it.

Adieu, very affectionately, W. C.*

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

DEAR SIR, *Weston, July* 24, 1787.

This is the first time I have written these six months, and nothing but the constraint of obligation could induce me to write now. I can not be so wanting to myself as not to endeavour at least to thank you both for the visits with which you have favoured me, and the poems that you sent me; in my present state of mind I taste nothing, nevertheless I read, partly from habit, and partly because it is the only thing that I am capable of.

I have therefore read Burns's poems, and have read them twice; and though they be written in a language that is new to me, and many of them on subjects much inferior to the author's ability, I think them on the whole a very extraordinary production. He is I believe the only poet these kingdoms have produced in the lower rank of life, since Shakspeare, (I should rather say since Prior) who need not be indebted for any part of his praise to a charitable consideration of his origin, and the disadvantages under which he has laboured. It will be pity if he should not hereafter divest himself of barbarism, and content himself with writing pure English, in which he appears perfectly qualified to excel. He who can command admiration, dishonours himself if he aims no higher than to raise a laugh.

I am, dear sir, with my best wishes for your prosperity, and with Mrs. Unwin's respects,

Your obliged and affectionate humble servant,

W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

DEAR SIR, *Weston, Aug.* 27, 1787.

I have not yet taken up the pen again, except to write to you. The little taste that I have had of your company, and your kindness in finding me out, make me wish that we were nearer neighbours, and that there were not so great a disparity in our years. That is to say, not that you were older, but that I were younger. Could we have met in earlier life, I flatter myself that we might have been more intimate than now we are likely to be. But you shall not find me slow to cultivate such a measure of your regard, as your friends of your own age can spare me. When your route shall lie through this country, I shall hope that the same kindness which has prompted you twice to call on me, will prompt you again, and I shall be happy if, on a future occasion, I may be able to give you a more cheerful reception than can be expected from an invalid. My health and spirits are considerably improved, and I once more associate with my neighbours. My head however has been the worst part of me, and still continues so; is subject to giddiness and pain, maladies very unfavourable to poetical employment; but a preparation of the bark, which I take regularly, has so far been of service to me in those respects, as to encourage in me a hope that by perseverance in the use of it, I may possibly find myself qualified to resume the translation of Homer

When I can not walk, I read, and read perhaps more than is good for me. But I can not be idle. The only mercy that I show myself in this respect is, that I read nothing that requires much closeness of application. I lately finished the perusal of a book, which in former years I have more than once attacked, but never till now conquered; some other book always interfered, before I could finish it. The work I mean is Barclay's Argenis: and, if ever you allow yourself to read for mere amusement, I can recommend it to you (provided you have not already perused it) as the most amusing romance that ever was written. It is the only one indeed of an old date that I ever had the patience to go through with. It is interesting in a high degree; richer in incident than can be imagined, full of surprises, which the reader never forestalls, and yet free from all entanglement and confusion. The style too appears to me to be such as would not dishonour Tacitus himself.

Poor Burns loses much of his deserved praise in this country, through our ignorance of his language. I despair of meeting with any Englishman who will take the pains that I have taken to understand him. His candle is bright, but shut up in a dark lantern. I lent him to a very sensible neighbour of mine: but his uncouth dialect spoiled all; and before he had half read him through, he was quite *ram-feezled.*

W C

* The illness mentioned in this letter interrupted the writer's translation of Homer during eight months.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, Aug. 30, 1787.

MY DEAREST COUSIN,

THOUGH it cost me something to write, it would cost me more to be silent. My intercourse with my neighbours being renewed, I can no longer seem to forget how many reasons there are, why you especially should not be neglected; no neighbour indeed, but the kindness of my friends, and ere long, I hope, an inmate.

My health and spirits seem to be mending daily. To what end I know not, neither will conjecture, but endeavour, as far as I can, to be content that they do so. I use exercise, and take the air in the park and wilderness. I read much, but as yet write not. Our friends at the Hall make themselves more and more amiable in our account, by treating us rather as old friends, than as friends newly acquired. There are few days in which we do not meet, and I am now almost as much at home in their house as in our own. Mr. Throckmorton, having long since put me in possession of all his ground, has now given me possession of his library; an acquisition of great value to me, who never have been able to live without books, since I first knew my letters, and who have no books of my own. By his means I have been so well supplied that I have not yet even looked at the Lounger, for which however I do not forget that I am obliged to you. *His* turn comes next, and I shall probably begin him to-morrow.

Mr. George Throckmorton is at the Hall. I thought I had known these brothers long enough to have found out all their talents and accomplishments. But I was mistaken. The day before yesterday, after having walked with us, they *carried* us up to the library (a more accurate writer would have said *conducted* us) and then they showed me the contents of an immense port-folio, the work of their own hands. It was furnished with drawings of the architectural kind, executed in a most masterly manner, and among others, contained outside and inside views of the Pantheon, I mean the Roman one. They were all, I believe, made at Rome. Some men may be estimated at a first interview, but the Throckmortons must be seen often, and known long, before one can understand all their value.

They often inquire after you, and ask me whether you visit Weston this autumn. I answer yes, and I charge you, my dearest cousin, to authenticate my information. Write to me, and tell us when we may expect to see you. We were disappointed that we had no letter from you this morning. You will find me coated and buttoned according to your recommendation.

I write but little, because writing is become new to me; but I shall come on by degrees. Mrs. Unwin begs to be affectionately remembered to you. She is in tolerable health, which is the chief comfort here that I have to boast of.

Yours, my dearest cousin, as ever, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

MY DEAREST COZ,

The Lodge, Sept. 4, 1787.

COME when thou canst come, secure of being always welcome! All that is here is thine, together with the hearts of those who dwell here. I am only sorry, that your journey hither is necessarily postponed beyond the time when I did hope to have seen you; sorry too that my uncle's infirmities are the occasion of it. But years *will* have their course, and their effect: they are happiest, so far as this life is concerned, who like him escape those effects the longest, and who do not grow old before their time. Trouble and anguish do that for some, which only longevity does for others. A few months since I was older than your father is now, and though I have lately recovered, as Falstaff says, *some smatch of my youth*, I have but little confidence, in truth none, in so flattering a change, but expect, *when I least expect it*, to wither again. The past is a pledge for the future.

Mr. G. is here, Mrs. Throckmorton's uncle. He is lately arrived from Italy, where he has resided several years, and is so much the gentleman, that it is impossible to be more so. Sensible, polite, obliging; slender in his figure, and in manners most engaging—every way worthy to be related to the Throckmortons.

I have read Savary's travels into Egypt; Memoirs du Baron de Tott; Fenn's original letters; the letters of Frederick of Bohemia, and am now reading Memoirs d' Henri de Lorraine, Duc de Guise. I have also read Barclay's Argenis, a Latin Romance, and the best Romance that ever was written. All these, together with Madan's letters to Priestley, and several pamphlets, within these two months. So I am a great reader.

W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, Sept. 15, 1787.

MY DEAREST COUSIN,

ON Monday last I was invited to meet your friend Miss J—— at the Hall, and there we found her. Her good nature, her humorous manner, and her good sense, are charming; insomuch that

even I, who was never much addicted to speech-making, and who at present find myself particularly indisposed to it, could not help saying at parting, I am glad that I have seen you, and sorry that I have seen so little of you. We were sometimes many in company; on Thursday we were fifteen, but we had not altogether so much vivacity and cleverness as Miss J———, whose talent at mirth-making has this rare property to recommend it, that nobody suffers by it.

I am making a gravel walk for winter use, under a warm hedge in the orchard. It shall be furnished with a low seat for your accommodation, and if you do but like it I shall be satisfied. In wet weather, or rather after wet weather, when the street is dirty, it will suit you well, for laying on an easy declivity through its whole length, it must of course be immediately dry.

You are very much wished for by our friends at the Hall—how much by me I will not tell you till the second week in October

Yours, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

MY DEAR COZ, *The Lodge, Sept.* 29, 1787.

I THANK you for your political intelligence; retired as we are, and seemingly excluded from the world, we are not indifferent to what passes in it; on the contrary, the arrival of a newspaper, at the present juncture, never fails to furnish us with a theme for discussion, short indeed, but satisfactory, for we seldom differ in opinion.

I have received such an impression of the Turks from the memoirs of Baron de Tott, which I read lately, that I can hardly help presaging the conquest of that empire by the Russians. The disciples of Mahomet are such babies in modern tactics, and so enervated by the use of their favourite drug; so fatally secure in their predestinarian dream, and so prone to a spirit of mutiny against their leaders, that nothing less can be expected. In fact, they had not been their own masters at this day, had but the Russians known the weakness of their enemies half so well as they undoubtedly know it now. Add to this, that there is a popular prophecy current in both countries, that Turkey is one day to fall under the Russian sceptre. A prophecy which, from whatever authority it be derived, as it will naturally encourage the Russians, and dispirit the Turks in exact proportion to the degree of credit it has obtained on both sides, has a direct tendency to effect its own accomplishment. In the mean time, if I wish them conquered, it is only because I think it will be a blessing to them to be governed by any other hand than their own. For under Heaven has there never been a throne so execrably tyrannical as theirs. The heads of the innocent that have been cut off to gratify the humour or caprice of their tyrants, could they be all collected and discharged against the walls of their city, would not leave one stone on another.

O that you were here this beautiful day! It is too fine by half to be spent in London. I have a perpetual din in my head, and though I am not deaf, hear nothing aright, neither my own voice, nor that of others. I am under a tub, from which tub accept my best love. Yours, W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

DEAR SIR, *Weston, Oct.* 19, 1787.

A summons from Johnson, which I received yesterday, calls my attention once more to the business of translation. Before I begin I am willing to catch though but a short opportunity to acknowledge your last favour. The necessity of applying myself with all diligence to a long work that has been but too long interrupted, will make my opportunities of writing rare in future.

Air and exercise are necessary to all men, but particularly so to the man whose mind labours; and to him who has been all his life accustomed to much of both, they are necessary in the extreme. My time since we parted has been devoted entirely to the recovery of health and strength for this service, and I am willing to hope with good effect. Ten months have passed since I discontinued my poetical efforts; I do not expect to find the same readiness as before, till exercise of the neglected faculty, such as it is, shall have restored it to me.

You find yourself, I hope, by this time as comfortably situated in your new abode as in a new abode one can be. I enter perfectly into all your feelings on occasion of the change. A sensible mind can not do violence even to a local attachment without much pain. When my father died I was young, too young to have reflected much. He was Rector of Berkhamstead, and there I was born. It had never occurred to me that a parson has no fee-simple in the house and glebe he occupies. There was neither tree, nor gate, nor stile, in all that country, to which I did not feel a relation, and the house itself I preferred to a palace. I was sent for from London to attend him in his last illness, and he died just before I arrived. Then, and not till then, I felt for the first time that I and my native place were disunited for ever. I sighed a long adieu to fields and woods, from which I once thought I should never be parted, and was at no time so sensible of their beauties, as just when I left them all behind me, to return no more.

W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, Nov. 10, 1787.

The Parliament, my dearest Cousin, prorogued continually, is a meteor dancing before my eyes, promising me my wish only to disappoint me, and none but the king and his ministers can tell when you and I shall come together. I hope however that the period, though so often postponed, is not far distant, and that once more I shall behold you, and experience your power to make winter gay and sprightly.

I have a kitten, my dear, the drollest of all creatures that ever wore a cat's skin. Her gambols are not to be described, and would be incredible if they could. In point of size she is likely to be a kitten always, being extremely small of her age, but time I suppose, that spoils every thing, will make her also a cat. You will see her I hope before that melancholy period shall arrive, for no wisdom that she may gain by experience and reflection hereafter, will compensate the loss of her present hilarity. She is dressed in a tortoise-shell suit, and I know that you will delight in her.

Mrs. Throckmorton carries us to-morrow in her chaise to Chicheley. The event however must be supposed to depend on elements, at least on the state of the atmosphere, which is turbulent beyond measure. Yesterday it thundered, last night it lightened, and at three this morning I saw the sky as red as a city in flames could have made it. I have a leech in a bottle that foretels all these prodigies and convulsions of nature. No, not as you will naturally conjecture by articulate utterance of oracular notices, but by a variety of gesticulations, which here I have not room to give an account of. Suffice it to say, that no change of weather surprises him, and that in point of the earliest and most accurate intelligence, he is worth all the barometers in the world. None of them all indeed can make the least pretence to foretell thunder—a species of capacity of which he has given the most unequivocal evidence. I gave but sixpence for him, which is a groat more than the market price, though he is in fact, or rather would be if leeches were not found in every ditch, an invaluable acquisition. W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

Nov. 16, 1787.

I thank you for the solicitude that you express on the subject of my present studies. The work is undoubtedly long and laborious, but it has an end, and, proceeding leisurely, with a due attention to the use of air and exercise, it is possible that I may live to finish it. Assure yourself of one thing, that though to a bystander it may seem an occupation surpassing the powers of a constitution never very athletic, and, at present, not a little the worse for wear, I can invent for myself no employment that does not exhaust my spirits more. I will not pretend to account for this; I will only say that it is not the language of predilection for a favourite amusement, but that the fact is really so. I have even found that those plaything avocations which one may execute almost without any attention, fatigue me, and wear me away, while such as engage me much and attach me closely, are rather serviceable to me than otherwise. W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, Nov. 27, 1787.

It is the part of wisdom, my dearest Cousin, to sit down contented under the demands of necessity, because they are such. I am sensible that you can not, in my uncle's present infirm state, and of which it is not possible to expect any considerable amendment, indulge either us, or yourself, with a journey to Weston. Yourself I say, both because I know it will give you pleasure to see *Causidice mi** once more, especially in the comfortable abode where you have placed him, and because, after so long an imprisonment in London, you, who love the country, and have a taste for it, would of course be glad to return to it. For my own part, to me it is ever new, and though I have now been an inhabitant of this village a twelvemonth, and have during the half of that time been at liberty to expatiate, and to make discoveries, I am daily finding out fresh scenes and walks, which you would never be satisfied with enjoying: some of them are unapproachable by you either on foot or in your carriage. Had you twenty toes (whereas I suppose you have but ten) you could not reach them; and coach wheels have never been seen there since the flood. Before it indeed, (as Burnet says that the earth was then perfectly free from all inequalities in its surface) they might have been seen there every day. We have other walks both upon hill tops, and in valleys beneath, some of which by the help of your carriage, and many of them without its help, would be always at your command.

On Monday morning last, Sam brought me word that there was a man in the kitchen who desired to speak with me. I ordered him in. A plain, decent, elderly figure made its appearance, and being desired to sit, spoke as follows: "Sir, I am clerk of the parish of All-saints in Northampton; brother of Mr. C. the upholsterer. It is customary for the person in my office to annex to a bill of

* The appellation which Sir Thomas Hesketh used to give him in jest, when he was of the Temple.

mortality, which he publishes at Christmas, a copy of verses. You would do me a great favour, sir, if you would furnish me with one." To this I replied, "Mr. C. you have several men of genius in your town, why have you not applied to some of them? There is a namesake of yours in particular, C——, the statuary, who, every body knows, is a first-rate maker of verses. He surely is the man of all the world for your purpose."—"Alas! Sir, I have heretofore borrowed help from him, but he is a gentleman of so much reading, that the people of our town can not understand him." I confess to you, my dear, I felt all the force of the compliment implied in this speech, and was almost ready to answer, Perhaps, my good friend, they may find me unintelligible too for the same reason. But on asking him whether he had walked over to Weston on purpose to implore the assistance of my muse, and on his replying in the affirmative, I felt my mortified vanity a little consoled, and pitying the poor man's distress, which appeared to be considerable, promised to supply him. The wagon has accordingly gone this day to Northampton loaded in part with my effusions in the mortuary style. A fig for poets who write epitaphs upon individuals! I have written *one* that serves *two hundred* persons.

A few days since I received a second very obliging letter from Mr. M——. He tells me that his own papers, which are by far, he is sorry to say it, the most numerous, are marked V.I.Z. Accordingly, my dear, I am happy to find that I am engaged in a correspondence with Mr. Viz, a gentleman for whom I have always entertained the profoundest veneration. But the serious fact is, that the papers distinguished by those signatures have ever pleased me most, and struck me as the work of a sensible man, who knows the world well, and has more of Addison's delicate humour than any body.

A poor man begged food at the Hall lately. The cook gave him some vermicelli soup. He ladled it about some time with the spoon, and then returned it to her saying, "I am a poor man it is true, and I am very hungry, but yet I can not eat broth with maggots in it." Once more, my dear, a thousand thanks for your box full of good things, useful things, and beautiful things.

Yours ever, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, Dec. 4, 1787.

I am glad, my dearest coz, that my last letter proved so diverting. You may assure yourself of the literal truth of the whole narration, and that however droll, it was not in the least indebted to any embellishments of mine.

You say well, my dear, that in Mr. Throckmorton we have a peerless neighbour; we have so. In point of information upon all important subjects in respect too of expression and address, and in short, every thing that enters into the idea of a gentleman, I have not found his equal, not often, any where. Were I asked who in my judgment approaches nearest to him, in all his amiable qualities, and qualifications, I should certainly answer his brother George, who if he be not his exact counterpart, endued with precisely the same measure of the same accomplishments, is nevertheless deficient in none of them, and is of a character singularly agreeable, in respect of a certain manly, I had almost said, heroic frankness, with which his air strikes one almost immediately. So far as his opportunities have gone, he has ever been as friendly and obliging to us, as we could wish him, and were he lord of the Hall to-morrow, would I dare say conduct himself toward us in such a manner, as to leave us as little sensible as possible of the removal of its present owners. But all this I say, my dear, merely for the sake of stating the matter as it is; not in order to obviate, or to prove the inexpedience of any future plans of yours, concerning the place of our residence. Providence and time shape every thing; I should rather say Providence alone, for time has often no hand in the wonderful changes that we experience; they take place in a moment. It is not therefore worth while perhaps to consider much what we will, or will not do in years to come, concerning which all that I can say with certainty at present is, that those years will be to me the most welcome, in which I can see the most of you. W. C.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

My dear friend, *Weston, Dec.* 6, 1787.

A short time since, by the help of Mrs. Throckmorton's chaise, Mrs. Unwin and I reached Chicheley. "Now," said I to Mrs. Chester, "I shall write boldly to your brother Walter, and will do it immediately. I have passed the gulf that parted us, and he will be glad to hear it." But let not the man who translates Homer be so presumptuous as to have a will of his own, or to promise any thing. A fortnight, I suppose, has elapsed since I paid this visit, and I am only now beginning to fulfil what I then undertook to accomplish without delay. The old Grecian must answer for it.

I spent my morning there so agreeably, that I have ever since regretted more sensibly, that there are five miles of a dirty country interposed between us. For the increase of my pleasure, I had the good fortune to find your brother the bishop there. We had much talk about many things, but most,

I believe, about Homer; and great satisfaction it gave me to find, that on the most important points of that subject his lordship and I were exactly of one mind. In the course of our conversation he produced from his pocket-book a translation of the first ten or twelve lines of the Iliad, and in order to leave my judgment free, informed me kindly at the same time that they were not his own. I read them, and according to the best of my recollection of the original, found them well executed. The bishop indeed acknowledged that they were not faultless, neither did I find them so. Had they been such, I should have felt their perfection as a discouragement hardly to be surmounted; for at that passage I have laboured more abundantly than at any other, and hitherto with the least success. I am convinced that Homer placed it at the threshold of his work as a scarecrow to all translators. Now, Walter, if thou knowest the author of this version, and it be not treason against thy brother's confidence in thy secrecy, declare him to me. Had I been so happy as to have seen the bishop again before he left this country, I should certainly have asked him the question, having a curiosity upon the matter that is extremely troublesome.

The awkward situation in which you found yourself on receiving a visit from an authoress, whose works, though presented to you long before, you had never read, made me laugh, and it was no sin against my friendship for you to do so. It was a ridiculous distress, and I can laugh at it even now. I hope she catechised you well. How did you extricate yourself?—Now laugh at me. The clerk of the parish of All Saints, in the town of Northampton, having occasion for a poet, has appointed me to the office. I found myself obliged to comply. The bellman comes next, and then, I think, though even borne upon your swan's quill, I can soar no higher!

I am, my dear friend, faithfully yours, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, Dec. 10, 1787.

I THANK you for the snip of cloth, commonly called a pattern. At present I have two coats, and but one back. If at any time hereafter I should find myself possessed of fewer coats, or more backs, it will be of use to me.

Even as you suspect, my dear, so it proved. The ball was prepared for, the ball was held, and the ball passed, and we had nothing to do with it. Mrs. Throckmorton, knowing our trim, did not give us the pain of an invitation, for a pain it would have been. And why? as Sternhold says,—because, as Hopkins answers, we must have refused it. But it fell out singularly enough, that this ball was held, of all days in the year, on my birth day—and so I told them—but not till it was all over.

Though I have thought proper never to take any notice of the arrival of my MSS. together with the *other good things* in the box, yet certain it is, that I received them. I have furbished up the tenth book till it is as bright as silver, and am now occupied in bestowing the same labour upon the eleventh. The twelfth and thirteenth are in the hands of ———, and the fourteenth and fifteenth are ready to succeed them. This notable job is the delight of my heart, and how sorry shall I be when it is ended.

The smith and the carpenter, my dear, are both in the room, hanging a bell; if I therefore make a thousand blunders, let the said intruders answer for them all.

I thank you, my dear, for your history of the G—s. What changes in that family! And how many thousand families have in the same time experienced changes as violent as theirs! The course of a rapid river is the justest of all emblems, to express the variableness of our scene below. Shakspeare says, none ever bathed himself twice in the same stream, and it is equally true that the world upon which we close our eyes at night is never the same with that on which we open them in the morning.

I do not always say, give my love to my uncle, because he knows that I always love him. I do not always present Mrs. Unwin's love to you, partly for the same reason (Deuce take the smith and the carpenter,) and partly because I forget it. But to present my own I forget never, for I always have to finish my letter, which I know not how to do, my dearest coz, without telling you that I am ever yours, W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

DEAR SIR, *Weston, Dec.* 13, 1787

UNLESS my memory deceives me, I forewarned you that I should prove a very unpunctual correspondent. The work that lies before me engages unavoidably my whole attention. The length of it, the spirit of it, and the exactness that is requisite in its due performance, are so many most interesting subjects of consideration to me, who find that my best attempts are only introductory to others, and that what to day I suppose finished, to-morrow I must begin again. Thus it fares with a translator of Homer. To exhibit the majesty of such a poet in a modern language is a

task that no man can estimate the difficulty of till he attempts it. To paraphrase him loosely, to hang him with trappings that do not belong to him, all this is comparatively easy. But to represent him with only his own ornaments, and still to preserve his dignity, is a labour that, if I hope in any measure to achieve it, I am sensible can only be achieved by the most assiduous, and most unremitting attention. Our studies, however different in themselves, in respect of the means by which they are to be successfully carried on, bear some resemblance to each other. A perseverance that nothing can discourage, a minuteness of observation that suffers nothing to escape, and a determination not to be seduced from the straight line that lies before us, by any images with which fancy may present us, are essentials that should be common to us both. There are perhaps few arduous undertakings, that are not in fact more arduous than we at first supposed them. As we proceed, difficulties increase upon us, but our hopes gather strength also, and we conquer difficulties which, could we have foreseen them, we should never have had the boldness to encounter. May this be your experience, as I doubt not that it will. You possess by nature all that is necessary to success in the profession that you have chosen. What remains is in your own power. They say of poets, that they must be born such: so must mathematicians, so must great generals, and so must lawyers, and so indeed must men of all denominations, or it is not possible that they should excel. But with whatever faculties we are born, and to whatever studies our genius may direct us, studies they must still be. I am persuaded, that Milton did not write his Paradise Lost, nor Homer his Iliad, nor Newton his Principia, without immense labour. Nature gave them a bias to their respective pursuits, and that strong propensity, I suppose, is what we mean by genius. The rest they gave themselves. "Macte esto," therefore, have no fears for the issue!

I have had a second kind letter from your friend Mr. ——, which I have just answered. I must not I find hope to see him here, at least I must not much expect it. He has a family that does not permit him to fly southward. I have also a notion, that we three could spend a few days comfortably together, especially in a country like this, abounding in scenes with which I am sure you would both be delighted. Having lived till lately at some distance from the spot that I now inhabit, and having never been master of any sort of vehicle whatever, it is but just now that I begin myself to be acquainted with the beauties of our situation. To you I may hope, one time or other, to show them, and shall be happy to do it, when an opportunity offers.

Yours, most affectionately, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, Jan. 1, 1788.

Now for another story almost incredible! A story that would be quite such, if it was not certain that you give me credit for any thing. I have read the poem for the sake of which you sent the paper, and was much entertained by it. You think it perhaps, as very well you may, the only piece of that kind that was ever produced. It is indeed original, for I dare say Mr. Merry never saw mine; but certainly it is not unique. For most true it is, my dear, that ten years since, having a letter to write to a friend of mine, to whom I could write any thing, I filled a whole sheet with a composition, both in measure and in manner precisely similar. I have in vain searched for it. It is either burnt or lost. Could I have found it, you would have had double postage to pay. For that one man in Italy, and another in England, who never saw each other, should stumble on a species of verse, in which no other man ever wrote (and I believe that to be the case) and upon a style and manner too, of which, I suppose, that neither of them had ever seen an example, appears to me so extraordinary a fact, that I must have sent you mine, whatever it had cost you, and am really vexed that I can not authenticate the story by producing a voucher. The measure I recollect to have been perfectly the same, and as to the manner I am equally sure of that, and from this circumstance, that Mrs. Unwin and I never laughed more at any production of mine, perhaps not even at John Gilpin. But for all this, my dear, you must, as I said, give me credit; for the thing itself is gone to that limbo of vanity, where alone, says Milton, things lost on earth are to be met with. Said limbo is, as you know, in the moon, whither I could not at present convey myself without a good deal of difficulty and inconvenience.

This morning being the morning of new year's day, I sent to the hall a copy of verses, addressed to Mrs. Throckmorton, entitled, the Wish, or the Poet's New Year's Gift. We dine there to-morrow, when, I suppose, I shall hear news of them. Their kindness is so great, and they seize with such eagerness every opportunity of doing all they think will please us, that I held myself almost in duty bound to treat them with this stroke of my profession.

The small pox has done, I believe, all that it has to do at Weston. Old folks, and even women with child, have been inoculated. We talk of our freedom, and some of us are free enough, but not the poor. Dependant as they are upon parish bounty, they are sometimes obliged to submit to impositions, which perhaps in France itself could hardly be paralleled. Can man or woman be said

to be free, who is commanded to take a distemper, sometimes at least mortal, and in circumstances most likely to make it so? No circumstance whatever was permitted to exempt the inhabitants of Weston. The old as well as the young, and the pregnant as well as they who had only themselves within them, have been inoculated. Were I asked who is the most arbitrary sovereign on earth? I should answer, neither the king of France, nor the grand signor, but an overseer of the poor in England.

I am as heretofore occupied with Homer: my present occupation is the revisal of all I have done, viz. of the first fifteen books. I stand amazed at my own increasing dexterity in the business, being verily persuaded that, as far as I have gone, I have improved the work to double its former value.

That you may begin the new year and end it in all health and happiness, and many more when the present shall have been long an old one, is the ardent wish of Mrs. Unwin, and of yours, my dearest coz, most cordially, W. C.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Weston, Jan* 5, 1788.

I THANK you for your information concerning the author of the translation of those lines. Had a man of less note and ability than Lord Bagot produced it, I should have been discouraged. As it is, I comfort myself with the thought, that even he accounted it an achievement worthy of his powers, and that even he found it difficult. Though I never had the honour to be known to his lordship, I remember him well at Westminster, and the reputation in which he stood there. Since that time I have never seen him, except once, many years ago, in the House of Commons, when I heard him speak on the subject of a drainage bill better than any member there.

My first thirteen books have been criticised in London; have been by me accommodated to those criticisms, returned to London in their improved state, and sent back to Weston with an imprimantur. This would satisfy some poets less anxious than myself about what they expose in public; but it has not satisfied me. I am now revising them again by the light of my own critical taper, and make more alterations than at the first. But are they improvements? you will ask—Is not the spirit of the work endangered by all this attention to correctness? I think and hope that it is not. Being well aware of the possibility of such a catastrophe, I guard particularly against it. Where I find that a servile adherence to the original would render the passage less animated than it should be, I still, as at the first, allow myself a liberty. On all other occasions I prune with an unsparing hand, determined that there shall not be found in the whole translation an idea that is not Homer's. My ambition is to produce the closest copy possible, and at the same time as harmonious as I know how to make it. This being my object, you will no longer think, if indeed you have thought it at all, that I am unnecessarily and over much industrious. The original surpasses every thing; it is of an immense length, is composed in the best language ever used upon earth, and deserves, indeed demands all the labour that any translator, be he who he may, can possibly bestow on it. Of this I am sure, and your brother the good bishop is of the same mind, that, at present, mere English readers know no more of Homer in reality, than if he had never been translated. That consideration indeed it was, which mainly induced me to the undertaking; and if after all, either through idleness, or dotage upon what I have already done, I leave it chargeable with the same incorrectness as my predecessors, or indeed with any other that I may be able to amend, I had better have amused myself otherwise. And you I know are of my opinion.

I send you the clerk's verses, of which I told you. They are very clerklike, as you will perceive. But plain truth in plain words seemed to me to be the ne plus ultra of composition on such an occasion. I might have attempted something very fine, but then the persons principally concerned, viz. my readers, would not have understood me. If it puts them in mind that they are mortal, its best end is answered. My dear Walter, adieu!

Yours faithfully, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, Jan. 19, 1788.

WHEN I have prose enough to fill my paper, which is always the case when I write to you, I can not find in my heart to give a third part of it to verse. Yet this I must do, or I must make my pacquets more costly than worshipful, by doubling the postage upon you, which I should hold to be unreasonable. See then the true reason why I did not send you that same scribblement till you desired it. The thought which naturally presents itself to me on all such occasions is this—Is not your cousin coming? Why are you impatient? Will it not be time enough to show her your fine things when she arrives?

Fine things indeed I have few. He who has Homer to transcribe may well be contented to do little else. As when an ass, being harnessed with ropes to a sand cart, drags with hanging ears his heavy burthen, neither filling the long echoing streets with his harmonious bray, nor throwing up

his heels behind, frolicksome and airy, as asses less engaged are wont to do; so I, satisfied to find myself indispensably obliged to render into the best possible English metre eight and forty Greek books, of which the two finest poems in the world consist, account it quite sufficient if I may at last achieve that labour; and seldom allow myself those pretty little vagaries, in which I should otherwise delight, and of which, if I should live long enough, I intend hereafter to enjoy my fill.

This is the reason, my dear cousin, if I may be permitted to call you so in the same breath with which I have uttered this truly heroic comparison, this is the reason why I produce at present but few occasional poems, and the preceding reason is that which may account satisfactorily enough for my withholding the very few that I do produce. A thought sometimes strikes me before I rise; if it runs readily into verse, and I can finish it before breakfast, it is well; otherwise it dies, and is forgotten; for all the subsequent hours are devoted to Homer.

The day before yesterday, I saw for the first time Bunbury's new print, the Propagation of a Lie. Mr. Throckmorton sent it for the amusement of our party. Bunbury sells humour by the yard, and is, I suppose, the first vender of it who ever did so. He can not, therefore, be said to have humour without measure (pardon a pun, my dear, from a man who has not made one before these forty years) though he may certainly be said to be immeasurably droll.

The original thought is good, and the exemplification of it, in those very expressive figures, admirable. A poem on the same subject, displaying all that is displayed in those attitudes, and in those features, (for faces they can hardly be called) would be most excellent. The affinity of the two arts, viz. verse and painting, has been observed; possibly the happiest illustration of it would be found, if some poet would ally himself to some draughtsman, as Bunbury, and undertake to write every thing he should draw. Then let a musician be admitted of the party. He should compose the said poem, adapting notes to it exactly accommodated to the theme; so should the sister arts be proved to be indeed sisters, and the world die of laughing. W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

MY DEAREST COUSIN, *The Lodge, Jan.* 30, 1788.

IT is a fortnight since I heard from you, that is to say, a week longer than you have accustomed me to wait for a letter. I do not forget that you have recommended it to me, on occasions somewhat similar, to banish all anxiety, and to ascribe your silence only to the interruptions of company. Good advice, my dear, but not easily taken by a man circumstanced as I am. I have learned in the school of adversity, a school from which I have no expectation that I shall ever be dismissed, to apprehend the worst, and have ever found it the only course in which I can indulge myself without the least danger of incurring a disappointment. This kind of experience, continued through many years, has given me such an habitual bias to the gloomy side of every thing, that I never have a moment's ease on any subject to which I am not indifferent. How then can I be easy, when I am left afloat upon a sea of endless conjectures of which you furnish the occasion? Write I beseech you, and do not forget that I am now a battered actor upon this turbulent stage; that what little vigour of mind I ever had, of the self-supporting kind I mean, has long since been broken; and that though I can bear nothing well, yet any thing better than a state of ignorance concerning your welfare. I have spent hours in the night leaning upon my elbow and wondering what your silence means. I entreat you once more to put an end to these speculations, which cost me more animal spirits than I can spare; if you can not without great trouble to yourself, which in your situation may very possibly be the case, contrive opportunities of writing so frequently as usual, only say it, and I am content. I will wait, if you desire it, as long for every letter, but then let them arrive at the period once fixed, exactly at the time, for my patience will not hold out an hour beyond it. W. C

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, Feb. 1, 1788.

PARDON me, my dearest cousin, the mournful ditty that I sent you last. There are times when I see every thing through a medium that distresses me to an insupportable degree, and that letter was written in one of them. A fog that had for three days obliterated all the beauties of Weston, and a north-east wind, might possibly contribute not a little to the melancholy that indited it. But my mind is now easy, your letter has made it so, and I feel myself as blithe as a bird in comparison. I love you, my cousin, and can not suspect, either with or without cause, the least evil in which you may be concerned, without being greatly troubled! Oh trouble! the portion of all mortals—but mine in particular. Would I had never known thee, or could bid thee farewell for ever; for I meet thee at every turn, my pillows are stuffed with thee, my very roses smell of thee, and even my cousin, who would cure me of all trouble if she could, is sometimes innocently the cause of trouble to me.

I now see the unreasonableness of my late trouble, and would, if I could trust myself so far, pro-

mise never again to trouble either myself or you in the same manner, unless warranted by some more substantial ground of apprehension.

What I said concerning Homer, my dear, was spoken, or rather written, merely under the influence of a certain jocularity, that I felt at that moment. I am in reality so far from thinking myself an ass, and my translation a sand-cart, that I rather seem, in my own account of the matter, one of those flaming steeds harnessed to the chariot of Apollo, of which we read in the works of the ancients. I have lately, I know not how, acquired a certain superiority to myself in this business, and in this last revisal have elevated the expression to a degree far surpassing its former boast. A few evenings since I had an opportunity to try how far I might venture to expect such success of my labours as can alone repay them, by reading the first book of my Iliad to a friend of ours. He dined with you once at Olney. His name is Greatheed, a man of letters and of taste. He dined with us, and the evening proving dark and dirty, we persuaded him to take a bed. I entertained him as I tell you. He heard me with great attention, and with evident symptoms of the highest satisfaction, which, when I had finished the exhibition, he put out of all doubt by expressions which I can not repeat. Only this he said to Mrs. Unwin while I was in another room, that he had never entered into the spirit of Homer before, nor had any thing like a due conception of his manner. This I have said, knowing that it will please you, and will now say no more.

Adieu! my dear, will you never speak of coming to Weston more? W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

DEAR SIR, *The Lodge, Feb.* 14, 1788.

Though it be long since I received your last, I have not yet forgotten the impression it made upon me, nor how sensibly I felt myself obliged by your unreserved and friendly communications. I will not apologize for my silence in the interim, because, apprised as you are of my present occupation, the excuse that I might allege will present itself to you of course, and to dilate upon it would therefore be waste of paper.

You are in possession of the best security imaginable for the due improvement of your time, which is a just sense of its value. Had I been, when at your age, as much affected by that important consideration as I am at present, I should not have devoted, as I did, all the earliest parts of my life to amusement only. I am now in the predicament into which the thoughtlessness of youth betrays nine-tenths of mankind, who never discover that the health and good spirits, which generally accompany it, are in reality blessings only according to the use we make of them, till advanced years begin to threaten them with the loss of both. How much wiser would thousands have been, than now they ever will be, had a puny constitution, or some occasional infirmity, constrained them to devote those hours to study and reflection, which for want of some such check they have given entirely to dissipation! I, therefore, account you happy, who, young as you are, need not be informed that you can not always be so; and who already know that the materials, upon which age can alone build its comfort, should be brought together at an earlier period. You have indeed, in losing a father, lost a friend, but you have not lost his instructions. His example was not buried with him, but happily for you (happily because you are desirous to avail yourself of it) still lives in your remembrance, and is cherished in your best affections.

Your last letter was dated from the house of a gentleman, who was, I believe, my schoolfellow. For the Mr. C———, who lived at Watford, while I had any connexion with Hertfordshire, must have been the father of the present, and according to his age, and the state of his health, when I saw him last, must have been long dead. I never was acquainted with the family farther than by report, which always spoke honourably of them, though in all my journeys to and from my father's I must have passed the door. The circumstance however reminds me of the beautiful reflection of Glaucus in the sixth Iliad; beautiful as well for the affecting nature of the observation, as for the justness of the comparison, and the incomparable simplicity of the expression. I feel that I shall not be satisfied without transcribing it, and yet perhaps *my* Greek may be difficult to decipher.

Οιη περ φυλλων γενεη, τοιηδε και ανδρων.
Φυλλα τα μεν τ' ανεμος χαμαδις χεει, αλλα δε θ' υλη
Τηλεθοωσα φυει, εαρος δ' επιγιγνεται ωρη
Ως ανδρων γενεη, η μεν φυει, η δ' απολιγει.

Excuse this piece of pedantry in a man whose Homer is always before him! What would I give that he were living now, and within my reach! I, of all men living, have the best excuse for indulging such a wish, unreasonable as it may seem, for I have no doubt that the fire of his eye, and the smile of his lips, would put me now and then in possession of his full meaning more effectually than any commentator. I return you many thanks for the elegies which you sent me, both which I think deserving of much commendation. I should requite you but ill by sending you my mortuary verses, neither at present can I prevail on myself to do it, having no frank, and being conscious that they are not worth carriage without one. I have one copy left, and that copy I will keep for you.

W. C

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, Feb. 16, 1788.

I HAVE now three letters of yours, my dearest cousin, before me, all written in the space of a week, and must be indeed insensible of kindness, did I not feel yours on this occasion. I can not describe to you, neither could you comprehend it if I should, the manner in which my mind is sometimes impressed with melancholy on particular subjects. Your late silence was such a subject. I heard, saw, and felt, a thousand terrible things, which had no real existence, and was haunted by them night and day, till they at last extorted from me the doleful epistle, which I have since wished had been burned before I sent it. But the cloud was passed, and as far as you are concerned, my heart is once more at rest.

Before you gave me the hint, I had once or twice, as I lay on my bed, watching the break of day, ruminated on the subject which, in your last but one, you recommended to me.

Slavery, or a release from slavery, such as the poor negroes have endured, or perhaps both these topics together, appeared to me a theme so important at the present juncture, and at the same time so susceptible of poetical management, that I more than once perceived myself ready to start in that career, could I have allowed myself to desert Homer for so long a time as it would have cost me to do them justice.

While I was pondering these things, the public prints informed me that Miss More was on the point of publication, having actually finished what I had not yet begun.

The sight of her advertisement convinced me that my best course would be that to which I felt myself most inclined, to persevere, without turning aside to attend to any other call, however alluring, in the business I have in hand.

It occurred to me likewise, that I have already borne my testimony in favour of my black brethren; and that I was one of the earliest, if not the first, of those who have in the present day expressed their detestation of the diabolical traffic in question.

On all these accounts I judged it best to be silent, and especially because I can not doubt that some effectual measures will now be taken to alleviate the miseries of their condition, the whole nation being in possession of the case, and it being impossible also to allege an argument in behalf of man-merchandize, that can deserve a hearing. I shall be glad to see Hannah More's poem; she is a favourite writer with me, and has more nerve and energy both in her thoughts and language than half the he-rhymers in the kingdom. The Thoughts on the Manners of the Great will likewise be most acceptable. I want to learn as much of the world as I can, but to acquire that learning at a distance, and a book with such a title promises fair to serve the purpose effectually.

I recommend it to you, my dear, by all means to embrace the fair occasion, and to put yourself in the way of being squeezed and incommoded a few hours, for the sake of hearing and seeing what you will never have an opportunity to see and hear hereafter, the trial of a man who has been greater, and more feared than the great Mogul himself. Whatever we are at home, we certainly have been tyrants in the East; and if these men have, as they are charged, rioted in the miseries of the innocent, and dealt death to the guiltless, with an unsparing hand, may they receive a retribution that shall in future make all governors and judges of ours, in those distant regions, tremble. While I speak thus, I equally wish them acquitted. They were both my schoolfellows, and for Hastings I had a particular value. Farewell.

W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, Feb. 22, 1788.

I DO not wonder that your ears and feelings were hurt by Mr. Burke's severe invective. But you are to know, my dear, or probably you know it already, that the prosecution of public delinquents has always, and in all countries, been thus conducted. The style of a criminal charge of this kind has been an affair settled among orators from the days of Tully to the present, and like all other practices that have obtained for ages, this in particular seems to have been founded originally in reason, and in the necessity of the case.

He who accuses another to the state, must not appear himself unmoved by the view of crimes with which he charges him, lest he should be suspected of fiction, or of precipitancy, or of a consciousness that after all he shall not be able to prove his allegations. On the contrary, in order to impress the minds of his hearers with a persuasion that he himself at least is convinced of the criminality of the prisoner, he must be vehement, energetic, rapid; must call him tyrant and traitor, and every thing else that is odious, and all this to his face, because all this, bad as it is, is no more than he undertakes to prove in the sequel; and if he can not prove it he must himself appear in a light little more desirable, and at the best to have trifled with the tribunal to which he has summoned him.

Thus Tully, in the very first instance of his oration against Catiline, calls him a monster; a manner of address in which he persisted till said monster, unable to support the fury of his accu-

ser's eloquence any longer, rose from his seat, elbowed for himself a passage through the crowd, and at last burst from the senate house in an agony, as if the furies themselves had followed him.

And now, my dear, though I have thus spoken, and have seemed to plead the cause of that species of eloquence which you, and every creature who has your sentiments must necessarily dislike, perhaps I am not altogether convinced of its propriety. Perhaps, at the bottom, I am much more of opinion that if the charge, unaccompanied by any inflammatory matter, and simply detailed, being once delivered into the court, and read aloud; the witnesses were immediately examined, and sentence pronounced according to the evidence; not only the process would be shortened, much time and much expense saved, but justice would have at least as fair play as now she has. Prejudice is of no use in weighing the question—guilty or not guilty—and the principal aim, end, and effect of such introductory harangues is to create as much prejudice as possible. When you and I therefore shall have the sole management of such a business entrusted to us, we will order it otherwise.

I was glad to learn from the papers that our cousin Henry shone as he did in reading the charge. This must have given much pleasure to the General. Thy ever affectionate, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, March 3, 1788.

One day last week, Mrs. Unwin and I, having taken our morning walk, and returning homeward through the wilderness, met the Throckmortons. A minute after we had met them, we heard the cry of hounds at no great distance, and mounting the broad stump of an elm, which had been felled, and by the aid of which we were enabled to look over the wall, we saw them. They were all at that time in our orchard; presently we heard a terrier belonging to Mrs. Throckmorton, which you may remember by the name of Fury, yelping with much vehemence, and saw her running through the thickets within a few yards of us at her utmost speed, as if in pursuit of something which we doubted not was the fox. Before we could reach the other end of the wilderness, the hounds entered also; and when we arrived at the gate which opens into the grove, there we found the whole weary cavalcade assembled. The huntsman dismounting begged leave to follow his hounds on foot, for he was sure, he said, that they had killed him. A conclusion which I suppose he drew from their profound silence. He was accordingly admitted, and with a sagacity that would not have dishonoured the best hound in the world, pursuing precisely the same track which the fox and the dogs had taken, though he had never had a glimpse of either after their first entrance through the rails, arrived where he found the slaughtered prey. He soon produced dead reynard, and rejoined us in the grove with all his dogs about him. Having an opportunity to see a ceremony, which I was pretty sure would never fall in my way again, I determined to stay, and to notice all that passed with the most minute attention. The huntsman having, by the aid of a pitchfork, lodged reynard on the arm of an elm, at the height of about nine feet from the ground, there left him for a considerable time. The gentlemen sat on their horses contemplating the fox, for which they had toiled so hard; and the hounds assembled at the foot of the tree, with faces not less expressive of the most rational delight, contemplated the same object. The huntsman remounted; cut off a foot and threw it to the hounds—one of them swallowed it whole like a bolus. He then once more alighted, and drawing down the fox by the hinder legs, desired the people, who were by this time rather numerous, to open a lane for him to the right and left. He was instantly obeyed, when throwing the fox to the distance of some yards, and screaming like a fiend, "tear him to pieces"—at least six times repeatedly, he consigned him over absolutely to the pack, who in a few minutes devoured him completely. Thus, my dear, as Virgil says, what none of the gods could have ventured to promise me, time itself, pursuing its accustomed course, has of its own accord presented me with. I have been in at the death of a fox, and you now know as much of the matter as I, who am as well informed as any sportsman in England.

Yours, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, March 12, 1788.

Slavery, and the Manners of the Great, I have read. The former I admired, as I do all that Miss More writes, as well for energy of expression, as for the tendency of the design. I have never yet seen any production of her pen, that has not recommended itself by both these qualifications. There is likewise much good sense in her manner of treating every subject, and no mere poetic cant (which is the thing that I abhor,) in her manner of treating any. And this I say, not because you now know and visit her, but it has long been my opinion of her works, which I have both spoken and written, as often as I have had occasion to mention them.

Mr. Wilberforce's little book (if he was the author of it) has also charmed me. It must, I should

imagine, engage the notice of those to whom it is addressed. In that case one may say to them, either answer it, or be set down by it. They will do neither. They will approve, commend, and forget it. Such has been the fate of all exhortations to reform, whether in verse or prose, and however closely pressed upon the conscience, in all ages. Here and there a happy individual, to whom God gives grace and wisdom to profit by the admonition, is the better for it. But the aggregate body (as Gilbert Cooper used to call the multitude) remain, though with a very good understanding of the matter, like horse and mule that have none.

We shall now soon lose our neighbours at the Hall. We shall truly miss them, and long for their return. Mr. Throckmorton said to me last night, with sparkling eyes, and a face expressive of the highest pleasure—"We compared you this morning with Pope; we read your fourth Iliad, and his, and I verily think we shall beat him. He has many superfluous lines, and does not interest one. When I read your translation, I am deeply affected. I see plainly your advantage, and am convinced that Pope spoiled all by attempting the work in rhyme." His brother George, who is my most active amanuensis, and who indeed first introduced the subject, seconded all he said. More would have passed, but Mrs. Throckmorton having seated herself at the harpsichord, and for my amusement merely, my attention was of course turned to her. The new vicar of Olney is arrived, and we have exchanged visits. He is a plain, sensible man, and pleases me much. A treasure for Olney, if Olney can understand his value. W. C.

TO GENERAL COWPER.

MY DEAR GENERAL, *Weston*, 1788.

A LETTER is not pleasant which excites curiosity, but does not gratify it. Such a letter was my last, the defects of which I therefore take the first opportunity to supply. When the condition of our negroes in the islands was first presented to me as a subject for songs, I felt myself not at all allured to the undertaking: it seemed to offer only images of horror, which could by no means be accommodated to the style of that sort of composition. But having a desire to comply, if possible, with the request made to me, after turning the matter in my mind as many ways as I could, I at last, as I told you, produced three, and that which appears to myself the best of those three, I have sent you. Of the other two, one is serious, in a strain of thought perhaps rather too serious, and I could not help it. The other, of which the slave-trader is himself the subject, is somewhat ludicrous. If I could think them worth your seeing, I would, as opportunity should occur, send them also. If this amuses you, I shall be glad.* W. C.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *March* 19, 1788.

The spring is come, but not I suppose that spring which our poets have celebrated. So I judge at least by the extreme severity of the season, sunless skies, and freezing blasts, surpassing all that we experienced in the depth of winter. How do you dispose of yourself in this howling month of March? As for me, I walk daily, be the weather what it may, take bark, and write verses. By the aid of such means as these, I combat the north-east wind with some measure of success, and look forward, with the hope of enjoying it, to the warmth of summer.

Have you seen a little volume lately published, entitled The Manners of the Great? It is said to have been written by Mr. Wilberforce, but whether actually written by him or not, is undoubtedly the work of some man intimately acquainted with the subject, a gentleman, and a man of letters. If it makes the impression on those to whom it is addressed, that may be in some degree expected from his arguments, and from his manner of pressing them, it will be well. But you and I have lived long enough in the world to know that the hope of a general reformation in any class of men whatever, or of women either, may easily be too sanguine.

I have now given the last revisal to as much of my translation as was ready for it, and do not know, that I shall bestow another single stroke of my pen on that part of it before I send it to the press. My business at present is with the sixteenth book, in which I have made some progress, but have not yet actually sent forth Patrocles to the battle. My first translation lies always before me; line by line I examine it as I proceed, and line by line reject it. I do not however hold myself altogether indebted to my critics for the better judgment, that I seem to exercise in this matter now than in the first instance. By long study of him, I am in fact become much more familiar with Homer than at any time heretofore, and have possessed myself of such a taste of his manner, as is not to be attained by mere cursory reading for amusement. But, alas! 'tis after all a mortifying consideration that the majority of my judges hereafter will be no judges of this. *Græcum est, non potest legi*, is a motto that would suit nine in ten of those who will give themselves airs about it, and pretend to like or to dislike No mat-

* The Morning Dream (see Poems) accompanied this Letter.

ter. I know I shall please *you*, because I know *what* pleases you, and am sure that I have done it. Adieu! my good friend,

Ever affectionately yours, W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Weston, March* 29, 1788.

I REJOICE that you have so successfully performed so long a journey without the aid of hoofs or wheels. I do not know that a journey on foot exposes a man to more disasters than a carriage or a horse; perhaps it may be the safer way of traveling, but the novelty of it impressed me with some anxiety on your account.

It seems almost incredible to myself, that my company should be at all desirable to you, or to any man. I know so little of the world as it goes at present, and labour generally under such a depression of spirits, especially at those times when I could wish to be most cheerful, that my own share in every conversation appears to me to be the most insipid thing imaginable. But you say you found it otherwise, and I will not for my own sake doubt your sincerity, *de gustibus non est disputandum*, and since such is yours, I shall leave you in quiet possession of it, wishing indeed both its continuance and increase. I shall not find a properer place in which to say, accept of Mrs. Unwin's acknowledgments, as well as mine, for the kindness of your expressions on this subject, and be assured of an undissembling welcome at all times, when it shall suit you to give us your company at Weston. As to her, she is one of the sincerest of the human race, and if she receives you with the appearance of pleasure, it is because she feels it. Her behaviour on such occasions is with her an affair of conscience, and she dares no more look a falsehood than utter one.

It is almost time to tell you that I have received the books safe, they have not suffered the least detriment by the way, and I am much obliged to you for them. If my translation should be a little delayed in consequence of this favour of yours, you must take the blame on yourself. It is impossible not to read the notes of a commentator so learned, so judicious, and of so fine a taste as Dr. Clarke, having him at one's elbow. Though he has been but a few hours under my roof, I have already peeped at him, and find that he will be *instar omnium* to me. They are such notes exactly as I wanted. A translator of Homer should ever have somebody at hand to say, "that's a beauty," lest he should slumber where his author does not; not only depreciating, by such inadvertency, the work of his original, but depriving perhaps his own of an embellishment which wanted only to be noticed.

If you hear ballads sung in the streets on the hardships of the negroes in the islands, they are probably mine. It must be an honour to any man to have given a stroke to that chain, however feeble. I fear however that the attempt will fail. The tidings which have lately reached me from London concerning it, are not the most encouraging. While the matter slept, or was but slightly adverted to, the English only had their share of shame in common with other nations on account of it. But since it has been canvassed and searched to the bottom, since the public attention has been riveted to the horrible scheme, we can no longer plead either that we did not know it, or did not think of it. Wo be to us if we refuse the poor captives the redress to which they had so clear a right, and prove ourselves in the sight of God and men indifferent to all considerations but those of gain! Adieu. W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, March 31, 1788.

MY DEAREST COUSIN,

MRS. THROCKMORTON has promised to write to me. I beg that as often as you shall see her you will give her a smart pinch, and say, "Have you written to my cousin? I build all my hopes of her performance on this expedient, and for so doing these my letters, not patent, shall be your sufficient warrant. You are thus to give her the question till she shall answer, "Yes." I have written one more song, and sent it. It is called the Morning Dream, and may be sung to the tune of Tweedside, or any other tune that will suit, for I am not nice on that subject. I would have copied it for you, had I not almost filled my sheet without it, but now, my dear, you must stay till the sweet syrens of London shall bring it to you, or if that happy day should never arrive, I hereby acknowledge myself your debtor to that amount. I shall now probably cease to sing of tortured negroes, a theme which never pleased me, but which in the hope of doing them some little service, I was not unwilling to handle.

If any thing could have raised Miss More to a higher place in my opinion than she possessed before, it could only be your information that, after all, she, and not Mr. Wilberforce, is author of that volume. How comes it to pass, that she, being a woman, writes with a force, and energy, and a correctness hitherto arrogated by the men, and not very frequently displayed even by the men themselves. Adieu, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, May 6, 1788.

MY DEAREST COUSIN,

You ask me how I like Smollett's Don Quixote? I answer, well, perhaps better than any body's. But having no skill in the original, some diffidence becomes me. That is to say, I do not know whether I *ought* to prefer it or not. Yet there is so little deviation from other versions of it which I have seen, that I do not much hesitate. It has made me laugh I know immoderately, and in such a case *ca suffit*.

A thousand thanks, my dear, for the new convenience in the way of stowage which you are so kind as to intend me. There is nothing in which I am so deficient as repositories for letters, papers, and litter of all sorts. Your last present has helped me somewhat; but not with respect to such things as require lock and key, which are numerous. A box therefore so secured will be to me an invaluable acquisition. And since you leave me to my option, what shall be the size thereof, I of course prefer a folio. On the back of the book-seeming box some artist, expert in those matters, may inscribe these words,

Collectanea curiosa.

The English of which is, a collection of curiosities. A title which I prefer to all others, because if I live, I shall take care that the box shall merit it, and because it will operate as an incentive to open that, which being locked can not be opened. For in these cases the greater the balk, the more wit is discovered by the ingenious contriver of it, viz. myself.

The General I understand by his last letter is in town. In my last to him, I told him news; possibly it will give you pleasure, and ought for that reason to be made known to you as soon as possible. My friend Rowley, who I told you has after twenty-five years' silence renewed his correspondence with me, and who now lives in Ireland, where he has many and considerable connexions, has sent to me for thirty subscription papers. Rowley is one of the most benevolent and friendly creatures in the world, and will, I dare say, do all in his power to serve me.

I am just recovered from a violent cold, attended by a cough, which split my head while it lasted. I escaped these tortures all the winter, but whose constitution, or what skin, can possibly be proof against our vernal breezes in England? Mine never were, nor will be.

When people are intimate, we say they are as great as two inkle-weavers, on which expression I have to remark in the first place, that the word *great* is here used in a sense which the corresponding term has not, so far as I know, in any other language—and secondly, that inkle-weavers contract intimacies with each other sooner than other people on account of their juxtaposition in weaving of inkle. Hence it is that Mr. Gregson and I emulate those happy weavers in the closeness of our connexion. We live near to each other, and while the Hall is empty are each others' only extraforaneous comfort.

Most truly thine, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

Weston, May 8, 1788.

ALAS! my library!—I must now give it up for a lost thing for ever. The only consolation belonging to the circumstance is, or seems to be, that no such loss did ever befall any other man, or can ever befall me again. As far as books are concerned I am

Totus teres atque rotundus,

and may set fortune at defiance. The books which had been my father's had most of them his arms on the inside cover, but the rest no mark, neither his name nor mine. I could mourn for them like Sancho for his Dapple, but it would avail me nothing.

You will oblige me much by sending me Crazy Kate. A gentleman last winter promised me both her and the Lace-maker, but he went to London, that place in which, as in the grave, "all things are forgotten," and I have never seen either of them.

I begin to find some prospect of a conclusion, of the Iliad at least, now opening upon me, having reached the eighteenth book. Your letter found me yesterday in the very fact of dispersing the whole host of Troy by the voice only of Achilles. There is nothing extravagant in the idea, for you have witnessed a similar effect attending even such a voice as mine at midnight, from a garret window, on the dogs of a whole parish, whom I have put to flight in a moment. W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, May 12, 1788.

IT is probable, my dearest coz, that I shall not be able to write much, but as much as I can I will. The time between rising and breakfast is all that I can at present find, and this morning I lay longer than usual.

In the style of the lady's note to you I can easily perceive a snatch of her character. Neither men nor women write with such neatness of expression, who have not given a good deal of attention to language, and qualified themselves by study. At the same time it gave me much more

pleasure to observe that my coz, though not standing on the pinnacle of renown quite so elevated, as that which lifts Mrs. Montagu to the clouds, falls in no degree short of her in this particular; so that should she make you a member of her academy, she will do it honour. Suspect me not of flattering you, for I abhor the thought; neither *will* you suspect it. Recollect that it is an invariable rule with me, never to pay compliments to those I love.

Two days, *en suite*, I have walked to Gayhurst; a longer journey than I have walked on foot these seventeen years. The first day I went alone, designing merely to make the experiment, and choosing to be at liberty to return at whatsoever point of my pilgrimage I should find myself fatigued. For I was not without suspicion that years, and some other things no less injurious than years, viz. melancholy and distress of mind, might by this time have unfitted me for such achievements. But I found it otherwise. I reached the church, which stands, as you know, in the garden, in fifty-five minutes, and returned in ditto time to Weston. The next day I took the same walk with Mr. Powley, having a desire to show him the prettiest place in the country. I not only performed these two excursions without injury to my health, but have by means of them gained indisputable proof that my ambulatory faculty is not yet impaired; a discovery which, considering that to my feet alone I am likely, as I have ever been, to be indebted always for my transportation from place to place, I find very delectable.

You will find in the Gentleman's Magazine a sonnet addressed to Henry Cowper, signed T. H. I am the writer of it. No creature knows this but yourself; you will make what use of the intelligence you shall see good. W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *May* 24, 1788.

For two excellent prints I return you my sincere acknowledgments. I can not say that poor Kate remembles much the original, who was neither so young nor so handsome as the pencil has represented her; but she was a figure well suited to the account given of her in the Task, and has a face exceedingly expressive of despairing melancholy. The lace-maker is accidentally a good likeness of a young woman, once our neighbour, who was hardly less handsome than the picture twenty years ago; but the loss of one husband, and the acquisition of another, have, since that time, impaired her much; yet she might still be supposed to have sat to the artist.

We dined yesterday with your friend and mine, the most companionable and domestic Mr. C——. The whole kingdom can hardly furnish a spectacle more pleasing to a man who has a taste for true happiness, than himself, Mrs. C——, and their multitudinous family. Seven long miles are interposed between us, or perhaps I should oftener have an opportunity of declaiming on this subject.

I am now in the nineteenth book of the Iliad, and on the point of displaying such feats of heroism performed by Achilles, as make all other achievements trivial. I may well exclaim, O! for a muse of fire! especially having not only a great host to cope with, but a great river also; much however may be done, when Homer leads the way. I should not have chosen to have been the original author of such a business, even though all the nine had stood at my elbow. Time has wonderful effects. We admire that in an ancient, for which we should send a modern bard to Bedlam.

I saw at Mr. C——'s a great curiosity; an antique bust of Paris in Parian marble. You will conclude that it interested me exceedingly, I pleased myself with supposing that it once stood in Helen's chamber. It was in fact brought from the Levant, and though not well mended (for it had suffered much by time) is an admirable performance. W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH

MY DEAR COZ, *The Lodge, May* 27, 1788.

The General, in a letter which came yesterday, sent me enclosed a copy of my sonnet; thus introducing it.

"I send a copy of verses somebody has written in the Gentleman's Magazine for April last. Independent of my partiality towards the subject, I think the lines themselves are good."

Thus it appears that my poetical adventure has succeeded to my wish, and I write to him by this post, on purpose to inform him that the somebody in question is myself.

I no longer wonder that Mrs. Montagu stands at the head of all that is called learned, and that every critic veils his bonnet to her superior judgment. I am now reading, and have reached the middle of her Essay on the Genius of Shakspeare, a book of which, strange as it may seem, though I must have read it formerly, I had absolutely forgot the existence.

The learning, the good sense, the sound judgment, and the wit displayed in it, fully justify not only my compliment, but all compliments that either have been already paid to her talents, or shall be paid hereafter. Voltaire, I doubt not, rejoiced that his antagonist wrote in English, and that his countrymen could not possibly be judges of the dispute. Could they have known how much she was in the right, and by how many thousand

miles the bard of Avon is superior to all their dramatists, the French critic would have lost half his fame among them.

I saw at Mr. C——'s a head of Paris; an antique of Parian marble. His uncle, who left him the estate, brought it, as I understand, from the Levant: you may suppose I viewed it with all the enthusiasm that belongs to a translator of Homer. It is in reality a great curiosity, and highly valuable.

Our friend Sephus has sent me two prints, the Lacemaker and Crazy Kate. These also I have contemplated with pleasure, having as you know, a particular interest in them. The former of them is not more beautiful than a lace-maker, once our neighbour at Olney; though the artist has assembled as many charms in her countenance as I ever saw in any countenance, one excepted. Kate is both younger and handsomer than the original from which I drew, but she is in a good style, and as mad as need be.

How does this hot weather suit thee, my dear, in London? as for me, with all my colonnades and bowers, I am quite oppressed by it. W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, June 3, 1788.

MY DEAREST COUSIN,

The excessive heat of these last few days was indeed oppressive; but excepting the languor that it occasioned both in my mind and body, it was far from being prejudicial to me. It opened ten thousand pores, by which as many mischiefs, the effects of long obstruction, began to breathe themselves forth abundantly. Then came an east wind, baneful to me at all times, but following so closely such a sultry season, uncommonly noxious. To speak in the seaman's phrase, not entirely strange to you, *I was taken all aback;* and the humours which would have escaped, if old Eurus would have given them leave, finding every door shut, have fallen into my eyes. But in a country like this, poor miserable mortals must be content to suffer all that sudden and violent changes can inflict; and if they are quit for about half the plagues that Caliban calls down on Prospero, they may say we are well off, and dance for joy, if the rheumatism or cramp will let them.

Did you ever see an advertisement by one Fowle, a dancing-master of Newport Pagnel? If not, I will contrive to send it to you for your amusement. It is the most extravagantly ludicrous affair of the kind I ever saw. The author of it had the good hap to be crazed, or he had never produced any thing half so clever; for you will ever observe, that they who are said to have lost their wits, have more than other people. It is therefore only a slander, with which envy prompts the malignity of persons in their senses to asperse wittier than themselves. But there are countries in the world, where the mad have justice done them, where they are revered as the subjects of inspiration, and consulted as oracles. Poor Fowle would have made a figure there. W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Weston, June* 8, 1788.

Your letter brought me the very first intelligence of the event it mentions. My last letter from Lady Hesketh gave me reason enough to expect it, but the certainty of it was unknown to me till I learned it by your information. If gradual decline, the consequence of great age, be a sufficient preparation of the mind to encounter such a loss, our minds were certainly prepared to meet it: yet to you I need not say that no preparation can supersede the feelings of the heart on such occasions. While our friends yet live inhabitants of the same world with ourselves, they seem still to live to *us;* we are sure that they sometimes think of us; and however improbable it may seem, it is never impossible that we may see each other once again. But the grave, like a great gulf, swallows all such expectation, and in the moment when a beloved friend sinks into it, a thousand tender recollections awaken a regret, that will be felt in spite of all reasonings, and let our warnings have been what they may. Thus it is I take my last leave of poor Ashley, whose heart towards me was ever truly parental, and to whose memory I owe a tenderness and respect that will never leave me. W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, June 10, 1788.

MY DEAREST COUSIN,

Your kind letter of precaution to Mr. Gregson sent him hither as soon as chapel-service was ended in the evening. But he found me already apprized of the event that occasioned it, by a line from Sephus, received a few hours before. My dear uncle's death awakened in me many reflections which for a time sunk my spirits. A man like him would have been mourned, had he doubled the age he reached. At any age his death would have been felt as a loss, that no survivor could repair. And though it was not probable that for my own part I should ever see him more, yet the consciousness that he still lived, was a comfort to me. Let it comfort us now, that we have lost him only at a time when nature could afford him to us no longer: that as his life was blameless, so was his death without anguish; and that he is gone to Heaven,

I know not, that human life, in its most prosperous state, can present any thing to our wishes half so desirable, as such a close of it.

Not to mingle this subject with others that would ill suit with it, I will add no more at present, than a warm hope, that you and your sister will be able effectually to avail yourselves of all the consolatory matter with which it abounds! You gave yourselves, while he lived, to a father, whose life was doubtless prolonged by your attentions, and whose tenderness of disposition made him always deeply sensible of your kindness in this respect, as well as in many others. His old age was the happiest that I have ever known, and I give you both joy of having had so fair an opportunity, and of having so well used it, to approve yourselves equal to the calls of such a duty in the sight of God and man.

W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, June 15, 1788.

Although I knew that you must be very much occupied on the present most affecting occasion, yet, not hearing from you, I began to be very uneasy on your account, and to fear that your health might have suffered by the fatigue both of body and spirits, that you must have undergone, till a letter, that reached me yesterday from the General, set my heart at rest, so far as that cause of anxiety was in question. He speaks of my uncle in the tenderest terms, such as show how truly sensible he was of the amiableness and excellence of his character, and how deeply he regrets his loss. We have indeed lost one, who has not left his like in the present generation of our family, and whose equal, in all respects, no future of it will probably produce. My memory retains so perfect an impression of him, that, had I been painter instead of poet, I could from those faithful traces have perpetuated his face and form with the most minute exactness; and this I the rather wonder at, because some, with whom I was equally conversant five and twenty years ago, have almost faded out of all recollection with me. But he made impression not soon to be effaced, and was in figure, in temper, and manner, and in numerous other respects, such as I shall never behold again. I often think what a joyful interview there has been between him and some of his contemporaries, who went before him. The truth of the matter is, my dear, that they are the happy ones, and that we shall never be such ourselves, till we have joined the party. Can there be any thing so worthy of our warmest wishes as to enter on an eternal, unchangeable state, in blessed fellowship and communion with those whose society we valued most, and for the best reasons, while they continued with us? A few steps more through a vain foolish world, and this happiness will be yours. But be not hasty, my dear, to accomplish thy journey! For of all that live, thou art one whom I can least spare; for thou also art one, who shalt not leave thy equal behind thee.

W. C.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

My dear Walter, *Weston, June* 17, 1788.

You think me, no doubt, a tardy correspondent, and such I am, but not willingly. Many hindrances have intervened, and the most difficult to surmount have been those which the east and north-west winds have occasioned, breathing winter upon the roses of June, and inflaming my eyes, ten times more sensible of the inconvenience than they. The vegetables of England seem, like our animals, of a hardier and bolder nature than those of other countries. In France and Italy flowers blow, because it is warm, but here, in spite of the cold. The season however is somewhat mended at present, and my eyes with it. Finding myself this morning in perfect ease of body, I seize the welcome opportunity to do something at least towards the discharge of my arrears to you.

I am glad that you liked my song, and, if I liked the others myself so well as that I sent you, I would transcribe for you them also. But I sent *that*, because I accounted it the best. Slavery, and especially negro-slavery, because the cruellest, is an odious and disgusting subject. Twice or thrice I have been assailed with entreaties to write a poem on that theme. But besides that it would be in some sort treason against Homer to abandon him for other matter, I felt myself so much hurt in my spirits the moment I entered on the contemplation of it, that I have at last determined absolutely to have nothing more to do with it. There are some scenes of horror, on which my imagination can dwell, not without some complacence. But then they are such scenes as God, not man produces. In earthquakes, high winds, tempestuous seas, there is the grand as well as the terrible. But when man is active to disturb, there is such meanness in the design, and such cruelty in the execution, that I both hate and despise the whole operation, and feel it a degradation of poetry to employ her in the description of it. I hope also that the generality of my countrymen have more generosity in their nature than to want the fiddle of verse to go before them in the performance of an act, to which they are invited by the loudest calls of humanity.

Breakfast calls, and then Homer.

Ever yours, W. C.

Erratum.—Instead of Mr. Wilberforce as author of Manners of the Great, read Hannah More.

My paper mourns, and my seal. It is for the death of a venerable uncle, Ashley Cowper, at the age of eighty-seven.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

Weston, June 23, 1788.

When I tell you that an unanswered letter troubles my conscience in some degree like a crime, you will think me endued with most heroic patience, who have so long submitted to that trouble on account of yours not answered yet. But the truth is, that I have been much engaged. Homer (you know) affords me constant employment; besides which I have rather what may be called, considering the privacy in which I have long lived, a numerous correspondence; to one of my friends in particular, a near and much-loved relation, I write weekly, and sometimes twice in the week; nor are these my only excuses; the sudden changes of the weather have much affected me, and especially with a disorder most unfavourable to letter-writing, an inflammation in my eyes. With all these apologies I approach you once more, not altogether despairing of forgiveness.

It has pleased God to give us rain, without which this part of our country at least must soon have become a desert. The meadows have been parched to a January brown, and we have foddered our cattle for some time, as in the winter. The goodness and power of God are never (I believe) so universally acknowledged as at the end of a long drought. Man is naturally a self-sufficient animal, and in all concerns that seem to lie within the sphere of his own ability, thinks little or not at all of the need he always has of protection and furtherance from above. But he is sensible that the clouds will not assemble at his bidding, and that, though the clouds assemble, they will not fall in showers because he commands them. When therefore at last the blessing descends, you shall hear even in the streets the most irreligious and thoughtless with one voice exclaim—"Thank God!"—confessing themselves indebted to his favour, and willing, at least so far as words go, to give him the glory. I can hardly doubt therefore that the earth is sometimes parched, and the crops endangered, in order that the multitude may not want a memento to whom they owe them, nor absolutely forget the power on which all depend for all things.

Our solitary part of the year is over. Mrs. Unwin's daughter and son-in-law have lately spent some time with us. We shall shortly receive from London our old friends the Newtons (he was once minister of Olney); and, when they leave us, we expect that Lady Hesketh will succeed them, perhaps to spend the summer here, and possibly the winter also. The summer indeed is leaving us at a rapid rate, as do all the seasons, and though I have marked their flight so often, I know not which is the sweetest. Man is never so deluded as when he dreams of his own duration. The answer of the old Patriarch to Pharaoh may be adopted by every man at the close of the longest life—"Few and evil have been the days of the years of my pilgrimage." Whether we look back from fifty, or from twice fifty, the past appears equally a dream; and we can only be said truly to have lived, while we have been profitably employed. Alas, then! making the necessary deductions, how short is life! Were men in general to save themselves all the steps they take to no purpose, or to a bad one, what numbers, who are now active, would become sedentary!

Thus I have sermonized through my paper. Living where you live, you can bear with me the better. I always follow the leading of my unconstrained thoughts, when I write to a friend, be they grave or otherwise. Homer reminds me of you every day. I am now in the twenty-first Iliad.

Adieu. W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, June 27, 1788.

For the sake of a longer visit, my dearest coz, I can be well content to wait. The country, this country at least, is pleasant at all times, and when winter is come, or near at hand, we shall have the better chance for being snug. I know your passion for retirement indeed, or for what we call *deedy* retirement, and the F——s intending to return to Bath with their mother, when her visit at the Hall is over, you will then find here exactly the retirement in question. I have made in the orchard the best winter-walk in all the parish, sheltered from the east, and from the north-east, and open to the sun, except at his rising, all the day. Then we will have Homer and Don Quixote: and then we will have saunter and chat, and one laugh more before we die. Our orchard is alive with creatures of all kinds: poultry of every denomination swarms in it, and pigs, the drollest in the world!

I rejoice that we have a cousin Charles also, as well as a cousin Henry, who has had the address to win the good-likings of the Chancellor. May he fare the better for it! As to myself, I have long since ceased to have any expectations from that quarter. Yet, if he were indeed mortified as you say (and no doubt you have particular reasons for thinking so,) and repented to that degree of his hasty exertions in favour of the present occupant, who can tell? he wants neither means nor management, but can easily at some future period re-

dress the evil, if he chooses to do it. But in the mean time life steals away, and shortly neither he will be in circumstances to do me a kindness, nor I to receive one at his hands. Let him make haste, therefore, or he will die a promise in my debt, which he will never be able to perform. Your communications on this subject are as safe as you can wish them. We divulge nothing but what might appear in the magazine, nor that without great consideration.

I must tell you a feat of my dog Beau. Walking by the river side, I observed some water-lilies floating at a little distance from the bank. They are a large white flower, with an orange coloured eye, very beautiful. I had a desire to gather one, and, having your long cane in my hand, by the help of it endeavoured to bring one of them within my reach. But the attempt proved vain, and I walked forward. Beau had all the while observed me very attentively. Returning soon after toward the same place, I observed him plunge into the river, while I was about forty yards distant from him; and when I had nearly reached the spot, he swam to land with a lily in his mouth, which he came and laid at my foot.

Mr. Rose, whom I have mentioned to you as a visiter of mine for the first time soon after you left us, writes me word that he has seen my ballads against the slave-mongers, but not in print. Where he met with them, I know not. Mr. Bull begged hard for leave to print them at Newport-Pagnel, and I refused, thinking that it would be wrong to anticipate the nobility, gentry, and others, at whose pressing instance I composed them, in their design to print them. But perhaps I need not have been so squeamish; for the opportunity to publish them in London seems now not only ripe, but rotten. I am well content. There is but one of them with which I am myself satisfied, though I have heard them all well spoken of. But there are very few things of my own composition, that I can endure to read, when they have been written a month, though at first they seem to me to be all perfection.

Mrs. Unwin, who has been much the happier since the time of your return hither has been in some sort settled, begs me to make her kindest remembrance. Yours, my dear, most truly, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, July 28, 1788.

It is in vain that you tell me you have no talent at description, while in fact you describe better than any body. You have given me a most complete idea of your mansion and its situation; and I doubt not that with your letter in my hand by way of map, could I be set down on the spot in a moment, I should find myself qualified to take my walks and my pastime in whatever quarter of your paradise it should please me the most to visit. We also, as you know, have scenes at Weston worthy of description; but because you know them well, I will only say that one of them has, within these few days, been much improved; I mean the lime walk. By the help of the axe and the woodbill, which have of late been constantly employed in cutting out all straggling branches that intercepted the arch, Mr. Throckmorton has now defined it with such exactness, that no cathedral in the world can show one of more magnificence or beauty. I bless myself that I live so near it; for were it distant several miles, it would be well worth while to visit it, merely as an object of taste; not to mention the refreshment of such a gloom both to the eyes and spirits. And these are the things which our modern improvers of parks and pleasure grounds have displaced without mercy; because, forsooth, they are rectilinear. It is a wonder they do not quarrel with the sunbeams for the same reason.

Have you seen the account of five hundred celebrated authors now living? I am one of them; but stand charged with the high crime and misdemeanour of totally neglecting method; an accusation which, if the gentleman would take the pains to read me, he would find sufficiently refuted. I am conscious at least myself of having laboured much in the arrangement of my matter, and of having given to the several parts of my book of the Task, as well as to each poem in the first volume, that sort of slight connexion, which poetry demands; for in poetry, (except professedly of the didactic kind) a logical precision would be stiff, pedantic, and ridiculous. But there is no pleasing some critics; the comfort is, that I am contented, whether they be pleased or not. At the same time, to my honour be it spoken, the chronicler of us five hundred prodigies bestows on me, for aught I know, more commendations than on any other of my confraternity. May he live to write the histories of as many thousand poets, and find me the very best among them; Amen!

I join with you, my dearest coz, in wishing that I owned the fee simple of all the beautiful scenes around you, but such emoluments were never designed for poets. Am I not happier than ever poet was, in having thee for my cousin, and in the expectation of thy arrival here whenever Strawberry-hill shall lose thee? Ever thine, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, August 9, 1788.

The Newtons are still here, and continue with us I believe until the 15th of the month. Here is also my friend Mr. Rose, a valuable young man,

who, attracted by the effluvia of my genius, found me out in my retirement last January twelvemonth. I have not permitted him to be idle, but have made him transcribe for me the twelfth book of the Iliad. He brings me the compliments of several of the literati, with whom he is acquainted in town, and tells me, that from Dr. Maclain, whom he saw lately, he learns that my book is in the hands of sixty different persons at the Hague, who are all enchanted with it, not forgetting the said Dr. Maclain himself, who tells him that he reads it every day, and is always the better for it. O rare we!

I have been employed this morning in composing a Latin motto for the king's clock; the embellishments of which are by Mr. Bacon. That gentleman breakfasted with us on Wednesday, having come thirty-seven miles out of his way on purpose to see your cousin. At his request I have done it, and have made two; he will choose that which liketh him best. Mr. Bacon is a most excellent man, and a most agreeable companion: I would that he lived not so remote, or that he had more opportunity of traveling.

There is not, so far as I know, a syllable of the rhyming correspondence between me and my poor brother left, save and except the six lines of t quoted in yours. I *had* the whole of it, but it perished in the wreck of a thousand other things, when I left the Temple. Breakfast calls. Adieu!

W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Weston, Aug.* 18, 1788.

I LEFT you with a sensible regret, alleviated only by the consideration that I shall see you again in October. I was under some concern also, lest, not being able to give you any certain directions nor knowing where you might find a guide, you should wander and fatigue yourself, good walker as you are, before you could reach Northampton. Perhaps you heard me whistle just after our separation; it was to call back Beau, who was running after you with all speed, to intreat you to return with me. For my part, I took my own time to return, and did not reach home till after one; and then so weary, that I was glad of my great chair, to the comforts of which I added a crust and a glass of rum and water, not without great occasion. Such a foot-traveller am I.

I am writing on Monday, but whether I shall finish my letter this morning depends on Mrs. Unwin's coming sooner or later down to breakfast. Something tells me that you set off to-day for Birmingham; and though it be a sort of Iricism to say here, I beseech you take care of yourself, for the day threatens great heat, I can not help it; the weather may be cold enough at the time when that good advice shall reach you: but be it hot, or be it cold, to a man that travels as you travel, take care of yourself, can never be an unseasonable caution. I am sometimes distressed on this account; for though you are young, and well made for such exploits, those very circumstances are more likely than any thing to betray you into danger.

Consule quid valeant *plantæ*, quid ferre recusent.

The Newtons left us on Friday. We frequently talked about you after your departure, and every thing that was spoken was to your advantage. I know they will be glad to see you in London, and perhaps when your summer and autumn rambles are over, you will afford them that pleasure. The Throckmortons are equally well disposed to you, and them also I recommend to you as a valuable connexion, the rather because you can only cultivate it at Weston.

I have not been idle since you went, having not only laboured as usual at the Iliad, but composed a *spick* and *span* new piece, called "The Dog and the Water-Lily," which you shall see when we meet again. I believe I related to you the incident which is the subject of it. I have also read most of Lavater's Aphorisms; they appear to me some of them wise, many of them whimsical, a few of them false, and not a few of them extravagant. *Nil ilii medium.* If he finds in a man the feature or quality that he approves, he deifies him; if the contrary, he is a devil. His verdict is in neither case, I suppose, a just one. W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Weston, Sept.* 11, 1788.

SINCE your departure I have twice visited the oak, and with my intention to push my inquiries a mile beyond it, where it seems I should have found another oak, much larger, and much more respectable than the former, but once I was hindered by the rain, and once by the sultriness of the day. This latter oak has been known by the name of Judith many ages, and is said to have been an oak at the time of the conquest. If I have not an opportunity to reach it before your arrival here, we will attempt that exploit together; and even if I should have been able to visit it ere you come, I shall yet be glad to do so; for the pleasure of extraordinary sights, like all other pleasures, is doubled by the participation of a friend.

You wish for a copy of my little dog's eulogium, which I will therefore transcribe: but by so doing, I shall leave myself but scanty room for prose.

I shall be sorry if our neighbours at the hall

should have left it, when we have the pleasure of seeing you. I want you to see them soon again, that a little *consuetudo* may wear off restraint; and you may be able to improve the advantage you have already gained in that quarter. I pitied you for the fears which deprived you of your uncle's company, and the more having suffered so much by those fears myself. Fight against that vicious fear, for such it is, as strenuously as you can. It is the worst enemy that can attack a man destined to the forum—it ruined me. To associate as much as possible with the most respectable company, for good sense and good breeding, is, I believe, the only, at least I am sure it is the best remedy. The society of men of pleasure will not cure it, but rather leaves us more exposed to its influence in company of better persons.

Now for the Dog and the Water-Lily.*

W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Weston, Sept.* 25, 1787.

> Say what is the thing by my Riddle design'd
> Which you carried to London, and yet left behind.

I EXPECT your answer and without a fee.—The half hour next before breakfast I devote to you. The moment Mrs. Unwin arrives in the study, be what I have written much or little, I shall make my bow, and take leave. If you live to be a judge, as if I augur right you will, I shall expect to hear of a walking circuit.

I was shocked at what you tell me of ———. Superior talents, it seems, give no security for propriety of conduct; on the contrary, having a natural tendency to nourish pride, they often betray the possessor into such mistakes, as men more moderately gifted never commit. Ability therefore is not wisdom, and an ounce of grace is a better guard against gross absurdity than the brightest talents in the world.

I rejoice that you are prepared for transcript work: here will be plenty for you. The day on which you shall receive this, I beg you will remember to drink one glass at least to the success of the Iliad, which I finished the day before yesterday, and yesterday began the Odyssey. It will be some time before I shall perceive myself travelling in another road; the objects around me are at present so much the same; Olympus, and a council of gods, meet me at my first entrance. To tell you the truth, I am weary of heroes and deities, and, with reverence be it spoken, shall be glad for variety's sake, to exchange their company for that of a Cyclops.

Weston has not been without its tragedies since you left us; Mrs. Throckmorton's piping bull-finch has been eaten by a rat, and the villain left nothing but poor Bully's beak behind him. It will be a wonder if this event does not, at some convenient time, employ my versifying passion. Did ever fair lady, from the Lesbia of Catullus to the present day, lose her bird and find no poet to commemorate the loss? W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Weston, Nov.* 30, 1788.

YOUR letter, accompanying the books with which you have favoured me, and for which I return you a thousand thanks, did not arrive till yesterday. I shall have great pleasure in taking now and then a peep at my old friend Vincent Bourne; the neatest of all men in his versification, though when I was under his ushership, at Westminster, the most slovenly in his person. He was so inattentive to his boys, and so indifferent whether they brought him good or bad exercises, or none at all, that he seemed determined, as he was the best, so to be the last Latin poet of the Westminster line; a plot which, I believe, he executed very successfully; for I have not heard of any who has at all deserved to be compared with him.

We have had hardly any rain or snow since you left us; the roads are accordingly as dry as in the middle of summer, and the opportunity of walking much more favourable. We have no season in my mind so pleasant as such a winter: and I account it particularly fortunate that such it proves, my cousin being with us. She is in good health, and cheerful, so are we all; and this I say, knowing you will be glad to hear it, for you have seen the time when this could not be said of all your friends at Weston. We shall rejoice to see you here at Christmas; but I recollected when I hinted such an excursion by word of mouth, you gave me no great encouragement to expect you. Minds alter, and yours may be of the number of those that do so; and if it should, you will be entirely welcome to us all. Were there no other reason for your coming than merely the pleasure it will afford to us, that reason alone would be sufficient; but after so many toils, and with so many more in prospect, it seems essential to your well-being that you should allow yourself a respite, which perhaps you can take as comfortably (I am sure as quietly) here as any where.

The ladies beg to be remembered to you with all possible esteem and regard; they are just come down to breakfast, and being at this moment extremely talkative, oblige me to put an end to my letter. Adieu. W. C.

* Cowper's Poems.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

Weston-Underwood, Dec. 2, 1788.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I TOLD you lately that I had an ambition to introduce to your acquaintance my valuable friend, Mr. Rose. He is now before you. You will find him a person of genteel manners and agreeable conversation. As to his other virtues and good qualities, which are many, and not often found in men of his years, I consign them over to your own discernment, perfectly sure that none will escape you. I give you joy of each other, and remain, my dear old friend, most truly yours, W. C.

TO ROBERT SMITH, ESQ.

Weston-Underwood, Dec. 20, 1788.

MY DEAR SIR,

MRS. UNWIN is in tolerable health, and adds her warmest thanks to mine for your favour, and for your obliging inquiries. My own health is better than it has been for many years. Long time I had a stomach that would digest nothing, and now nothing disagrees with it; an amendment for which I am, under God, indebted to the daily use of soluble tartar, which I have never omitted these two years. I am still, as you may suppose, occupied in my long labour. The Iliad has nearly received its last polish. And I have advanced in a rough copy as far as to the ninth book of the Odyssey. My friends are some of them in haste to see the work printed, and my answer to them is—"I do nothing else, and this I do day and night—it must in time be finished."

My thoughts, however, are not engaged to Homer only. I can not be so much a poet as not to feel greatly for the King, the Queen, and the country. My speculations on these subjects are indeed melancholy, for no such tragedy has befallen in my day. We are forbidden to trust in man; I will not therefore say I trust in Mr Pitt:—but in his counsels, under the blessing of Providence, the remedy is, I believe, to be found, if a remedy there be. His integrity, firmness, and sagacity, are the only human means that seem adequate to the great emergence.

You say nothing of your own health, of which I should have been happy to have heard favourably. May you long enjoy the best. Neither Mrs. Unwin nor myself have a sincerer, or a warmer wish, than for your felicity.

I am, my dear sir,
Your most obliged and affectionate
W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

MY DEAR SIR, *The Lodge, Jan.* 19, 1789.

I HAVE taken, since you went away, many of the walks which we have taken together; and none of them, I believe, without thoughts of you. I have, though not a good memory, in general, yet a good local memory, and can recollect, by the help of a tree or a stile, what you said on that particular spot. For this reason I purpose, when the summer is come, to walk with a book in my pocket; what I read at my fireside I forget, but what I read under a hedge, or at the side of a pond, that pond and that hedge will always bring to my remembrance; and this is a sort of *memoria technica*, which I would recommend to you if I did not know that you have no occasion for it.

I am reading Sir John Hawkins, and still hold the same opinion of his book, as when you were here. There are in it, undoubtedly, some awkwardnesses of phrase, and, which is worse, here and there some unequivocal indications of a vanity not easily pardonable in a man of his years; but on the whole I find it amusing, and to me at least, to whom every thing that has passed in the literary world within these five-and-twenty years is new, sufficiently replete with information. Mr. Throckmorton told me about three days since, that it was lately recommended to him by a sensible man, as a book that would give him great insight into the history of modern literature, and modern men of letters, a commendation which I really think it merits. Fifty years hence, perhaps, the world will feel itself obliged to him.

W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

MY DEAR SIR, *The Lodge, Jan.* 24, 1789.

WE have heard from my cousin in Norfolk-street; she reached home safely, and in good time. An observation suggests itself, which, though I have but little time for observation making, I must allow myself time to mention. Accidents, as we call them, generally occur when there seems least reason to expect them; if a friend of ours travels far in different roads, and at an unfavourable season, we are reasonably alarmed for the safety of one in whom we take so much interest; yet how seldom do we hear a tragical account of such a journey! It is, on the contrary, at home, in our yard or garden, perhaps in our parlour, that disaster finds us; in any place, in short, where we seem perfectly out of the reach of danger. The lesson inculcated by such a procedure on the part of Providence towards us seems to be that of perpetual dependence.

Having preached this sermon, I must hasten to a close; you know that I am not idle, nor can I afford to be so. I would gladly spend more time with you, but by some means or other this day has hitherto proved a day of hindrance and confusion. W. C.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Weston, Jan.* 29, 1789.

I SHALL be a better, at least a more frequent correspondent, when I have done with Homer. I am not forgetful of any letters that I owe, and least of all forgetful of my debts in that way to you; on the contrary, I live in a continual state of self-reproach for not writing more punctually; but the old Grecian, whom I charge myself never to neglect, lest I should never finish him, has at present a voice that seems to drown all other demands, and many to which I could listen with more pleasure than even to his *Os rotundum*. I am now in the eleventh book of the Odyssey, conversing with the dead. Invoke the Muse in my behalf, that I may roll the stone of Sisyphus with some success. To do it as Homer has done it is, I suppose, in our verse and language, impossible; but I will hope not to labour altogether to as little purpose as Sisyphus himself did.

Though I meddle little with politics, and can find but little leisure to do so, the present state of things unavoidably engages a share of my attention. But as they say, Archimedes, when Syracuse was taken, was found busied in the solution of a problem, so come what may, I shall be found translating Homer.

Sincerely yours, W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

MY DEAR SIR, *The Lodge, May* 20, 1789.

FINDING myself, between twelve and one, at the end of the seventeenth book of the Odyssey, I give the interval between the present moment and the time of walking, to you. If I write letters before I sit down to Homer, I feel my spirits too flat for poetry; and too flat for letter writing if I address myself to Homer first; but the last I choose as the least evil, because my friends will pardon my dulness, but the public will not.

I had been some days uneasy on your account, when yours arrived. We should have rejoiced to have seen you, would your engagements have permitted: but in the autumn I hope, if not before, we shall have the pleasure to receive you. At what time we may expect Lady Hesketh, at present I know not: but imagine that any time after the month of June you will be sure to find her with us, which I mention, knowing that to meet you will add a relish to all the pleasures she can find at Weston.

When I wrote those lines on the Queen's visit, I thought I had performed well; but it belongs to me, as I have told you before, to dislike whatever I write when it has been written a month. The performance was therefore sinking in my esteem, when your approbation of it, arriving in good time, buoyed it up again. It will now keep possession of the place it holds in my good opinion, because it has been favoured with yours; and a copy will certainly be at your service whenever you choose to have one.

Nothing is more certain than that when I wrote the line,

> God made the country, and man made the town,

I had not the least recollection of that very similar one, which you quote from Hawkins Brown. It convinces me that critics (and none more than Warton, in his notes on Milton's minor poems), have often charged authors with borrowing what they drew from their own fund. Brown was an entertaining companion when he had drunk his bottle, but not before; this proved a snare to him, and he would sometimes drink too much; but I know not that he was chargeable with any other irregularities. He had those among his intimates who would not have been such had he been otherwise viciously inclined; the Duncombes, in particular, father and son, who were of unblemished morals. W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *The Lodge, June* 5, 1789.

I AM going to give you a deal of trouble, but London folks must be content to be troubled by country folks; for in London only can our strange necessities be supplied. You must buy for me, if you please, a cuckoo clock; and now I will tell you where they are sold, which, Londoner as you are, it is possible you may not know. They are sold, I am informed, at more houses than one, in that narrow part of Holborn which leads into Broad St. Giles. It seems they are well going clocks, and cheap, which are the two best recommendations of any clock. They are made in Germany, and such numbers of them are annually imported, that they are become even a considerable article of commerce.

I return you many thanks for Boswell's Tour. I read it to Mrs. Unwin after supper, and we find it amusing. There is much trash in it, as there

must always be in every narrative that relates indiscriminately all that passed. But now and then the Doctor speaks like an oracle, and that makes amends for all. Sir John was a coxcomb, and Boswell is not less a coxcomb, though of another kind. I fancy Johnson made coxcombs of all his friends, and they in return made him a coxcomb; for with reverence be it spoken, such he certainly was, and, flattered as he was, he was sure to be so.

Thanks for your invitation to London, but unless London can come to me, I fear we shall never meet. I was sure that you would love my friend, when you should once be well acquainted with him; and equally sure that he would take kindly to you.

Now for Homer. W. C.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Weston, June* 16, 1789.

You will naturally suppose that the letter in which you announced your marriage occasioned me some concern, though in my answer I had the wisdom to conceal it. The account you gave me of the object of your choice was such as left me at liberty to form conjectures not very comfortable to myself, if my friendship for you were indeed sincere. I have since however been sufficiently consoled. Your brother Chester has informed me, that you have married not only one of the most agreeable, but one of the most accomplished women in the kingdom. It is an old maxim, that it is better to exceed expectation than to disappoint it, and with this maxim in your view it was, no doubt, that you dwelt only on circumstances of disadvantage, and would not treat me with a recital of others which abundantly overweigh them. I now congratulate not you only, but myself, and truly rejoice that my friend has chosen for his fellow-traveller through the remaining stages of his journey, a companion who will do honour to his discernment, and make his way, so far as it can depend on a wife to do so, pleasant to the last.

My verses on the Queen's visit to London either have been printed, or soon will be, in the World. The finishing to which you objected I have altered, and have substituted two new stanzas instead of it. Two others also I have struck out, another critic having objected to *them*. I think I am a very tractable sort of a poet. Most of my fraternity would as soon shorten the noses of their children because they were said to be too long, as thus dock their compositions in compliance with the opinion of others. I beg that when my life shall be written hereafter, my authorship's ductability of temper may not be forgotten!

I am, my dear friend, ever yours, W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

AMICO MIO, *The Lodge, June* 20, 1789.

I am truly sorry that it must be so long before we can have an opportunity to meet. My cousin, in her last letter but one, inspired me with other expectations, expressing a purpose, if the matter could be so contrived, of bringing you with her: I was willing to believe that you had consulted together on the subject, and found it feasible. A month was formerly a trifle in my account, but at my present age I give it all its importance, and grudge that so many months should yet pass, in which I have not even a glimpse of those I love, and of whom, the course of nature considered, I must ere long take leave forever—but I shall live till August.

Many thanks for the cuckoo, which arrived perfectly safe, and goes well, to the amusement and amazement of all who hear it. Hannah lies awake to hear it, and I am not sure that we have not others in the house that admire his music as much as she.

Having read both Hawkins and Boswell, I now think myself almost as much a master of Johnson's character as if I had known him personally, and can not but regret *that our bards of other times* found no such biographers as these. They have both been ridiculed, and the wits have had their laugh; but such an history of Milton or Shakspeare, as they have given of Johnson—O, how desirable!

TO MRS. THROCKMORTON.

July 18, 1789.

Many thanks, my dear madam, for your extract from George's letter. I retain but little Italian, yet that little was so forcibly mustered by the consciousness that I was myself the subject, that I presently became master of it. I have always said that George is a poet, and I am never in his company but I discover proofs of it; and the delicate address by which he has managed his complimentary mention of me, convinces me of it still more than ever. Here are a thousand poets of us, who have impudence enough to write for the public, but amongst the modest men who are by diffidence restrained from such an enterprise are those who would eclipse us all. I wish that George would make the experiment; I would bind on his laurels with my own hand.

Your gardener has gone after his wife, but having neglected to take his lyre, *alias* fiddle, with him, has not yet brought home his Eurydice. Your clock in the hall has stopped, and (strange to tell!) it stopped at the sight of the watch-maker. For he only looked at it, and it has been motionless

ever since. Mr. Gregson is gone, and the Hall is a desolation. Pray don't think any place pleasant that you may find in your rambles, that we may see you the sooner. Your aviary is all in good health. I pass it every day, and often inquire at the lattice; the inhabitants of it send their duty, and wish for your return. I took notice of the inscription on your seal, and had we an artist here capable of furnishing me with another, you should read on mine, "*Encore une lettre.*"

Adieu, W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

The Lodge, July 23, 1789.

You do well, my dear sir, to improve your opportunity; to speak in the rural phrase, this is your sowing time, and the sheaves you look for can never be yours unless you make that use of it. The colour of our whole life is generally such as the three or four first years, in which we are our own masters, make it. Then it is that we may be said to shape our own destiny, and to treasure up for ourselves a series of future successes or disappointments. Had I employed my time as wisely as you, in a situation very similar to yours, I had never been a poet perhaps, but I might by this time have acquired a character of more importance in society; and a situation in which my friends would have been better pleased to see me. But three years misspent in an attorney's office were almost of course followed by several more equally misspent in the Temple, and the consequence has been, as the Italian epitaph says, "*Sto qui.*"—The only use I can make of myself now, at least the best, is to serve *in terrorem* to others, when occasion may happen to offer, that they may escape (so far as my admonitions can have any weight with them) my folly and my fate. When you feel yourself tempted to relax a little of the strictness of your present discipline, and to indulge in amusement incompatible with your future interests, think on your friend at Weston.

Having said this, I shall next with my whole heart invite you hither, and assure you that I look forward to approaching August with great pleasure, because it promises me your company. After a little time (which we shall wish longer) spent with us, you will return invigorated to your studies, and pursue them with the more advantage. In the mean time you have lost little, in point of season, by being confined to London. Incessant rains, and meadows under water, have given to the summer the air of winter, and the country has been deprived of half its beauties.

It is time to tell you that we are well, and often make you our subject. This is the third meeting that my cousin and we have had in this country; and a great instance of good fortune I account it in such a world as this, to have expected such a pleasure thrice without being once disappointed. Add to this wonder as soon as you can by making yourself of the party.

W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Weston, Aug.* 8, 1789.

Come when you will, or when you can, you can not come at a wrong time, but we shall expect you on the day mentioned.

If you have any book, that you think will make pleasant evening reading, bring it with you. I now read Mrs. Piozzi's Travels to the ladies after supper, and shall probably have finished them before we shall have the pleasure of seeing you. It is the fashion, I understand, to condemn them. But we who make books ourselves are more merciful to book-makers. I would that every fastidious judge of authors were himself obliged to write; there goes more to the composition of a volume than many critics imagine. I have often wondered that the same poet who wrote the Dunciad should have written these lines,

> The mercy I to others show,
> That mercy show to me.

Alas! for Pope, if the mercy he showed to others was the measure of the mercy he received! he was the less pardonable too, because experienced in all the difficulties of composition.

I scratch this between dinner and tea; a time when I can not write much without disordering my noddle, and bringing a flush into my face. You will excuse me therefore if, through respect for the two important considerations of health and beauty, I conclude myself,

Ever yours, W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Weston, Sept.* 24, 1789.

You left us exactly at the wrong time. Had you staid till now, you would have had the pleasure of hearing even my cousin say—"I am cold."—And the still greater pleasure of being warm yourself; for I have had a fire in the study ever since you went. It is the fault of our summers, that they are hardly ever warm or cold enough. Were they warmer, we should not want a fire; and were they colder, we should have one.

I have twice seen and conversed with Mr. J——. He is witty, intelligent, and agreeable beyond the common measure of men who are so. But it is the constant effect of a spirit of party to make those hateful to each other, who are truly amiable in themselves.

Beau sends his love; he was melancholy the whole day after your departure. W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Weston, Oct.* 4, 1789.

The hamper is come, and come safe: and the contents I can affirm on my own knowledge are excellent. It chanced that another hamper and a box came by the same conveyance, all which I unpacked and expounded in the hall; my cousin sitting, mean time, on the stairs, spectatress of the business. We diverted ourselves with imagining the manner in which Homer would have described the scene. Detailed in his circumstantial way, it would have furnished materials for a paragraph of considerable length in an Odyssey.

> The straw-stuff'd hamper with his ruthless steel
> He open'd, cutting sheer th' inserted cords,
> Which bound the lid and lip secure. Forth came
> The rustling package first, bright straw of wheat,
> Or oats, or barley; next a bottle green
> Throat-full, clear spirits the contents, distill'd
> Drop after drop odorous, by the art
> Of the fair mother of his friend—the Rose.

And so on.

I should rejoice to be the hero of such a tale in the hands of Homer.

You will remember, I trust, that when the state of your health or spirits calls for rural walks and fresh air, you have always a retreat at Weston.

We are all well, all love you, down to the very dog; and shall be glad to hear that you have exchanged langour for alacrity, and the debility that you mentioned for indefatigable vigour.

Mr. Throckmorton has made me a handsome present; Villoison's edition of the Iliad, elegantly bound by Edwards. If I live long enough, by the contributions of my friends I shall once more be possessed of a library. Adieu, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Weston, Dec.* 18, 1789.

The present appears to me a wonderful period in the history of mankind. That nations so long contentedly slaves should on a sudden become enamoured of liberty, and understand, as suddenly, their own natural right to it, feeling themselves at the same time inspired with resolution to assert it, seems difficult to account for from natural causes. With respect to the final issue of all this, I can only say, that if, having discovered the value of liberty, they should next discover the value of peace, and lastly the value of the word of God, they will be happier than they ever were since the rebellion of the first pair, and as happy as it is possible they should be in the present life.

Most sincerely yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

MY DEAR WALTER,

I know that you are too reasonable a man to expect any thing like punctuality of correspondence from a translator of Homer, especially from one who is a doer also of many other things at the same time; for I labour hard not only to acquire a little fame for myself, but to win it also for others, men of whom I know nothing, not even their names, who send me their poetry, that by translating it out of prose into verse, I may make it more like poetry than it was. Having heard all this, you will feel yourself not only inclined to pardon my long silence, but to pity me also for the cause of it. You may if you please believe likewise, for it is true, that I have a faculty of remembering my friends even when I do not write to them, and of loving them not one jot the less, though I leave them to starve for want of a letter from me. And now I think you have an apology both as to style, matter, and manner, altogether unexceptionable.

Why is the winter like a backbiter? Because Solomon says that a backbiter separates between chief friends, and so does the winter; to this dirty season it is owing, that I see nothing of the valuable Chesters, whom indeed I see less at all times than serves at all to content me. I hear of them indeed occasionally from my neighbours at the Hall, but even of that comfort I have lately enjoyed less than usual, Mr. Throckmorton having been hindered by his first fit of the gout from his usual visits to Chichely. The gout however has not prevented his making me a handsome present of a folio edition of the Iliad, published about a year since at Venice, by a literato, who calls himself Villoison. It is possible that you have seen it, and that if you have it not yourself, it has at least found its way into Lord Bagot's library. If neither should be the case, when I write next (for sooner or later I shall certainly write to you again if I live) I will send you some pretty stories out of his Prolegomena, which will make your hair stand on end, as mine has stood on end already, they so horribly affect, in point of authenticity, the credit of the works of the immortal Homer.

Wishing you and Mrs. Bagot all the happiness that a new year can possibly bring with it, I remain with Mrs. Unwin's best respects, yours, my dear friend, with all sincerity, W. C.

My paper mourns for the death of Lord Cowper, my valuable cousin and much my benefactor.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I AM a terrible creature for not writing sooner, but the old excuse must serve, at least I will not occupy paper with the addition of others unless you should insist on it, in which case I can assure you that I have them ready. Now to business.

From Villoison I learn that it was the avowed opinion and persuasion of Callimachus (whose hymns we both studied at Westminster) that Homer was very imperfectly understood even in his day: that his admirers, deceived by the perspicuity of his style, fancied themselves masters of his meaning, when in truth they knew little about it.

Now we know that Callimachus, as I have hinted, was himself a poet, and a good one; he was also esteemed a good critic; he almost, if not actually, adored Homer, and imitated him as nearly as he could.

What shall we say to this? I will tell you what I say to it. Callimachus meant, and he could mean nothing more by this assertion, than that the poems of Homer were in fact an allegory; that under the obvious import of his stories lay concealed a mystic sense, sometimes philosophical, sometimes religious, sometimes moral, and that the generality either wanted penetration or industry, or had not been properly qualified by their studies, to discover it. This I can readily believe, for I am myself an ignoramus in these points, and except here and there, discern nothing more than the letter. But if Callimachus will tell me that even of *that* I am ignorant, I hope soon by two great volumes to convince him of the contrary.

I learn also from the same Villoison, that Pisistratus, who was a sort of Mecænas in Athens, where he gave great encouragement to literature, and built and furnished a public library, regretting that there was no complete copy of Homer's works in the world, resolved to make one. For this purpose he advertised rewards in all the newspapers to those, who, being possessed memoriter of any part or parcels of the poems of that bard, would resort to his house, and repeat them to his secretaries, that they might write them. Now it happened that more were desirous of the reward, than qualified to deserve it. The consequence was that the nonqualified persons having, many of them, a pretty knack at versification, imposed on the generous Athenian most egregiously, giving him, instead of Homer's verses, which they had not to give, verses of their own invention. He, good creature, suspecting no such fraud, took them all for gospel, and entered them into his volume accordingly.

Now let *him* believe the story who can. That Homer's works were in this manner corrected I *can* believe; but that a learned Athenian could be so imposed upon, with sufficient means of detection at hand, I *can not*. Would he not be on his guard? Would not a difference of style and manner have occurred? Would not that difference have excited a suspicion? Would not that suspicion have led to inquiry, and would not that inquiry have issued in detection? For how easy was it in the multitude of Homer-conners to find two, ten, twenty, possessed of the questionable passage, and by confronting them with the impudent impostor, to convict him? *Abeas ergo in malam rem cum istis tuis hallucinationibus, Villoisone!*

Faithfully yours, W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

MY DEAR SIR, *The Lodge, Jan.* 3, 1790.

I HAVE been long silent, but you have had the charity, I hope and believe, not to ascribe my silence to a wrong cause. The truth is, I have been too busy to write to any body, having been obliged to give my mornings to the revisal and correction of a little volume of Hymns for children written by I know not whom. This task I finished but yesterday, and while it was in hand wrote only to my cousin, and to her rarely. From her however I knew that you would hear of my well being, which made me less anxious about my debts to you, than I could have been otherwise.

I am almost the only person at Weston, known to you, who have enjoyed tolerable health this winter. In your next letter give us some account of your own state of health, for I have had many anxieties about you. The winter has been mild; but our winters are in general such that when a friend leaves us in the beginning of that season, I always feel in my heart a *perhaps* importing that probably we have met for the last time, and that the robins may whistle on the grave of one of us before the return of summer.

I am still thrumming Homer's lyre; that is to say, I am still employed in my last revisal; and to give you some idea of the intenseness of my toils, I will inform you that it cost me all the morning yesterday, and all the evening, to translate a single simile to my mind. The transitions from one member of the subject to another, though easy and natural in the Greek, turn out often so intolerably awkward in an English version, that almost endless labour, and no little address, are requisite to give them grace and elegance. I forget if I told you that your German Clavis has been of considerable use to me. I am indebted to it for a right understanding of the manner in which Achilles prepared pork, mutton, and goat's flesh for the entertainment of his friends, in the night when they came deputed by Agamemnon to negotiate a reconciliation. A passage of which nobody in

the world is perfectly master, myself only and Schaulfelbergerus excepted, nor ever was, except when Greek was a *live* language.

I do not know whether my cousin has told you or not how I brag in my letters to her concerning my translation; perhaps her modesty feels more for me than mine for myself, and she would blush to let even you know the degree of my self-conceit on that subject. I will tell you, however, expressing myself as decently as vanity will permit, that it has undergone such a change for the better in this last revisal, that I have much warmer hopes of success than formerly. Yours, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

MY DEAR COZ, *The Lodge, Jan.* 23, 1790.

I had a letter yesterday from the wild boy Johnson, for whom I have conceived a great affection. It was just such a letter as I like, of the true helter-skelter kind; and though he writes a remarkably good hand, scribbled with such rapidity, that it was barely legible. He gave me a droll account of the adventures of Lord Howard's note, and of his own in pursuit of it. The poem he brought me came as from Lord Howard, with his lordship's request that I would revise it. It is in the form of a pastoral, and is entitled "*The Tale of the Lute;* or *the Beauties of Audley End.*" I read it attentively; was much pleased with part of it, and part of it I equally disliked. I told him so, and in such terms as one naturally uses when there seems to be no occasion to qualify or to alleviate censure. I observed him afterwards somewhat more thoughtful and silent, but occasionally as pleasant as usual; and in Kilwick wood, where we walked next day, the truth came out; that he was himself the author; and that Lord Howard not approving it altogether, and several friends of his own age, to whom he had shown it, differing from his lordship in opinion, and being highly pleased with it, he had come at last to a resolution to abide by my judgment; a measure to which Lord Howard by all means advised him. He accordingly brought it, and will bring it again in the summer, when we shall lay our heads together and try to mend it.

I have lately had a letter also from Mrs. King, to whom I had written to inquire whether she were living or dead. She tells me the critics expect from my Homer every thing in some parts, and that in others I shall fall short. These are the Cambridge critics; and she has her intelligence from the botanical professor, Martyn. That gentleman in reply answers them, that I shall fall short in nothing, but shall disappoint them all. It shall be my endeavour to do so, and I am not without hope of succeeding. W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *The Lodge, Feb.* 2, 1790.

Should Heyne's Homer appear before mine, which I hope is not probable, and should he adopt in it the opinion of Bentley, that the whole last Odyssey is spurious, I will dare to contradict both him and the Doctor. I am only in part of Bentley's mind (if indeed his mind were such) in this matter, and giant as he was in learning, and eagle-eyed in criticism, am persuaded, convinced, and sure (can I be more positive?) that except from the moment when the Ithacans begin to meditate an attack on the cottage of Laertes, and thence to the end, that book is the work of Homer. From the moment aforesaid, I yield the point, or rather have never, since I had any skill in Homer, felt myself at all inclined to dispute it. But I believe perfectly at the same time that, Homer himself alone excepted, the Greek poet never existed who could have written the speeches made by the shade of Agamemnon, in which there is more insight into the human heart discovered than I ever saw in any other work, unless in Shakspeare's. I am equally disposed to fight for the whole passage that describes Laertes, and the interview between him and Ulysses. Let Bentley grant these to Homer, and I will shake hands with him as to all the rest. The battle with which the book concludes is, I think, a paltry battle, and there is a huddle in the management of it altogether unworthy of my favourite, and the favourite of all ages.

If you should happen to fall into company with Dr. Warton again, you will not, I dare say, forget to make him my respectful compliments, and to assure him that I felt myself not a little flattered by the favourable mention he was pleased to make of me and my labours. The poet who pleases a man like him has nothing to wish for. I am glad that you were pleased with my young cousin Johnson; he is a boy, and bashful, but has great merit in respect both of character and intellect. So far at least as in a week's knowledge of him I could possibly learn; he is very amiable, and very sensible, and inspired me with a warm wish to know him better. W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, Feb. 9, 1790.

I have sent you lately scraps instead of letters, having had occasion to answer immediately on the receipt, which always happens while I am *deep in Homer.*

I knew when I recommended Johnson to you that you would find some way to serve him, and

so it has happened, for notwithstanding your own apprehensions to the contrary, you have already procured him a chaplainship. This is pretty well, considering that it is an early day, and that you have but just begun to know that there is such a man under Heaven. I had rather myself be patronised by a person of small interest, with a heart like yours, than by the Chancellor himself, if he did not care a farthing for me.

If I did not desire you to make my acknowledgments to Anonymous, as I believe I did not, it was because I am not aware that I am warranted to do so. But the omission is of less consequence, because whoever he is, though he has no objection to doing the kindest things, he seems to have an aversion to the thanks they merit.

You must know that two odes composed by Horace have lately been discovered at Rome; I wanted them transcribed into the blank leaves of a little Horace of mine, and Mrs. Throckmorton performed that service for me; in a blank leaf therefore of the same book I wrote the following.*

W. C.

[TO MR. JOHNSON.]

DEAR SIR, *Weston, Feb.* 11, 1790.

I am very sensibly obliged by the remarks of Mr. Fuseli, and beg that you will tell him so: they afford me opportunities of improvement, which I shall not neglect. When he shall see the press-copy, he will be convinced of this; and will be convinced likewise that smart as he sometimes is, he spares me often when I have no mercy on myself. He will see almost a new translation. * * * I assure you faithfully, that whatever my faults may be, to be easily or hastily satisfied with what I have written is not one of them.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, Feb. 26, 1790.

You have set my heart at ease, my cousin, so far as you were yourself the object of its anxieties. What other troubles it feels can be cured by God alone. But you are never silent a week longer than usual, without giving an opportunity to my imagination (ever fruitful in flowers of a sable hue) to tease me with them day and night. London is indeed a pestilent place, as you call it, and I would, with all my heart, that thou hadst less to do with it; were you under the same roof with me, I should know you to be safe, and should never distress you with melancholy letters.

I feel myself well enough inclined to the measure you propose, and will show to your new acquaintance with all my heart a sample of my translation, but it shall not, if you please, be taken from the Odyssey. It is a poem of a gentler character than the Iliad, and as I propose to carry her by a *coup de main*, I shall employ Achilles, Agamemnon, and the two armies of Greece and Troy in my service. I will accordingly send you in the box that I received from you last night, the two first books of the Iliad, for that lady's perusal; to those I have given a third revisal; for them therefore I will be answerable, and am not afraid to stake the credit of my work upon *them* with her, or with any living wight, especially one who understands the original. I do not mean that even they are finished, for I shall examine and cross-examine them yet again, and so you may tell her, but I know that they will not disgrace me; whereas it is so long since I have looked at the Odyssey that I know nothing at all about it. They shall set sail from Olney on Monday morning in the Diligence, and will reach you I hope in the evening. As soon as she has done with them, I shall be glad to have them again, for the time draws near when I shall want to give them the last touch.

I am delighted with Mrs. Bodham's kindness, in giving me the only picture of my own mother that is to be found I suppose in all the world. I had rather possess it than the richest jewel in the British crown, for I loved her with an affection that her death, fifty-two years since, has not in the least abated. I remember her too, young as I was when she died, well enough to know that it is a very exact resemblance of her, and as such it is to me invaluable. Every body loved her, and with an amiable character so impressed upon all her features, every body was sure to do so.

I have a very affectionate and a very clever letter from Johnson, who promises me the transcript of the books entrusted to him in a few days. I have a great love for that young man; he has some drops of the same stream in his veins that once animated the original of that dear picture.

W. C.

TO MRS. BODHAM.

MY DEAREST ROSE, *Weston, Feb.* 27, 1790.

Whom I thought withered, and fallen from the stalk, but whom I find still alive: nothing could give me greater pleasure than to know it, and to learn it from yourself. I loved you dearly when you were a child, and love you not a jot the less for having ceased to be so. Every creature that bears any affinity to my own mother is dear to me, and you, the daughter of her brother, are but one remove distant from her; I love you therefore, and

* The verses to Mrs. Throckmorton on her beautiful transcript of Horace's Ode concluded this Letter.

love you much, both for her sake, and for your own. The world could not have furnished you with a present so acceptable to me, as the picture which you have so kindly sent me. I received it the night before last, and viewed it with a trepidation of nerves and spirits somewhat akin to what I should have felt, had the dear original presented herself to my embraces. I kissed it, and hung it where it is the last object that I see at night, and of course the first on which I open my eyes in the morning. She died when I had completed my sixth year, yet I remember her well, and am an ocular witness of the great fidelity of the copy. I remember too a multitude of the maternal tendernesses which I received from her, and which have endeared her memory to me beyond expression. There is in me, I believe, more of the Donne than of the Cowper; and though I love all of both names, and have a thousand reasons to love those of my own name, yet I feel the bond of nature draw me vehemently to your side. I was thought in the days of my childhood much to resemble my mother, and in my natural temper, of which at the age of fifty-eight I must be supposed a competent judge, can trace both her, and my late uncle, your father. Somewhat of his irritability, and a little I would hope both of his and of her ———, I know not what to call it, without seeming to praise myself, which is not my intention, but speaking to *you*, I will even speak out, and say *good nature*. Add to all this, I deal much in poetry, as did our venerable ancestor, the Dean of St. Paul's, and I think I shall have proved myself a Donne at all points. The truth is, that whatever I am, I love you all.

I account it a happy event, that brought the dear boy, your nephew, to my knowledge, and that breaking through all the restraints which his natural bashfulness imposed on him, he determined to find me out. He is amiable to a degree that I have seldom seen, and I often long with impatience to see him again.

My dearest cousin, what shall I say in answer to your affectionate invitation? I *must* say this, I can not come now, nor soon, and I wish with all my heart I could. But I will tell you what may be done perhaps, and it will answer to us just as well: you and Mr. Bodham can come to Weston, can you not? The summer is at hand, there are roads and wheels to bring you, and you are neither of you translating Homer. I am crazed that I can not ask you all together for want of house-room; but for Mr. Bodham and yourself, we have good room, and equally good for any third, in the shape of a Donne, whether named Hewitt, Bodham, Balls, or Johnson, or by whatever name distinguished. Mrs. Hewitt has particular claims upon me; she was my playfellow at Berkhamstead, and has a share in my warmest affections. Pray tell her so! Neither do I at all forget my cousin Harriet. She and I have been many a time merry at Catfield, and have made the parsonage ring with laughter. Give my love to her. Assure yourself, my dearest cousin, that I shall receive you as if you were my sister; and Mrs. Unwin is, for my sake, prepared to do the same. When she has seen you, she will love you for your own.

I am much obliged to Mr. Bodham for his kindness to my Homer, and with my love to you all, and with Mrs. Unwin's kind respects, am,

My dear, dear Rose, ever yours, W. C.

P. S.—I mourn the death of your poor brother Castres, whom I should have seen had he lived, and should have seen with the greatest pleasure. He was an amiable boy, and I was very fond of him.

Still another P. S.—I find on consulting Mrs. Unwin, that I have underrated our capabilities, and that we have not only room for you and Mr. Bodham, but for two of your sex, and even for your nephew into the bargain. We shall be happy to have it all so occupied.

Your nephew tells me that his sister, in the qualities of the mind, resembles you: that is enough to make her dear to me, and I beg you will assure her that she is so. Let it not be long before I hear from you.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

Weston, Feb. 28, 1790.

MY DEAR COUSIN JOHN,

I HAVE much wished to hear from you, and though you are welcome to write to Mrs. Unwin as often as you please, I wish myself to be numbered among your correspondents.

I shall find time to answer you, doubt it not! Be as busy as we may, we can always find time to do what is agreeable to us. By the way, had you a letter from Mrs. Unwin? I am witness that she addressed one to you before you went into Norfolk; but your mathematico-poetical head forgot to acknowledge the receipt of it.

I was never more pleased in my life than to learn, and to learn from herself, that my dearest Rose* is still alive. Had she not engaged me to love her by the sweetness of her character when a child, she would have done it effectually now, by making me the most acceptable present in the world, my own dear mother's picture. I am per-

* Mrs. Anne Bodham.

haps the only person living who remembers her, but I remember her well, and can attest on my own knowledge, the truth of the resemblance. Amiable and elegant as the countenance is, such exactly was her own; she was one of the tenderest parents, and so just a copy of her is therefore to me invaluable.

I wrote yesterday to my Rose, to tell her all this, and to thank her for her kindness in sending it! Neither do I forget your kindness, who intimated to her that I should be happy to possess it.

She invites me into Norfolk, but alas she might as well invite the house in which I dwell; for all other considerations and impediments apart, how is it possible that a translator of Homer should lumber to such a distance! But though I can not comply with her kind invitation, I have made myself the best amends in my power by inviting her, and all the family of Donnes, to Weston. Perhaps we could not accommodate them all at once, but in succession we could; and can at any time find room for five, three of them being females, and one a married one. You are a mathematician; tell me then how five persons can be lodged in three beds (two males and three females), and I shall have good hope, that you will proceed a senior optime? It would make me happy to see our house so furnished. As to yourself, whom I know to be a *subscalarian*, or a man that sleeps under the stairs, I should have no objection to all, neither could you possibly have any yourself, to the garret, as a place in which you might be disposed of with great felicity of accommodation.

I thank you much for your services in the transcribing way, and would by no means have you despair of an opportunity to serve me in the same way yet again;—write to me soon, and tell me when I shall see you.

I have not said the half that I have to say, but breakfast is at hand, which always terminates my epistles.

What have you done with your poem? The trimming that it procured you here has not, I hope, put you out of conceit with it entirely; you are more than equal to the alteration that it needs. Only remember, that in writing, perspicuity is always more than half the battle. The want of it is the ruin of more than half the poetry that is published. A meaning that does not stare you in the face is as bad as no meaning, because nobody will take the pains to poke for it. So now adieu for the present. Beware of killing yourself with problems; for if you do, you will never live to be another Sir Isaac.

Mrs. Unwin's affectionate remembrances attend you; Lady Hesketh is much disposed to love you; perhaps most who know you have some little tendency the same way.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, March 8, 1790.

MY DEAREST COUSIN,

I thank thee much and oft for negotiating so well this poetical concern with Mrs. ———, and for sending me her opinion in her own hand. I should be unreasonable indeed not to be highly gratified by it, and I like it the better for being modestly expressed. It is, as you know, and it shall be some months longer, my daily business to polish and improve what is done, that when the whole shall appear she may find her expectations answered. I am glad also that thou didst send her the sixteenth Odyssey, though, as I said before, I know not at all at present whereof it is made: but I am sure that thou wouldst not have sent it, hadst thou not conceived a good opinion of it thyself, and thought that it would do me credit. It was very kind in thee to sacrifice to this Minerva on my account.

For my sentiments on the subject of the Test Act, I can not do better than refer thee to my poem, entitled and called "Expostulation." I have there expressed myself not much in its favour; considering it in a religious view; and in a political one I like it not a jot the better. I am neither Tory nor High Churchman, but an old Whig, as my father was before me; and an enemy consequently to all tyrannical impositions.

Mrs. Unwin bids me return thee many thanks for thy inquiries so kindly made concerning her health. She is a little better than of late, but has been ill continually ever since last November. Every thing that could try patience and submission she has had, and her submission and patience have answered in the trial, though mine on her account have often failed sadly.

I have a letter from Johnson, who tells me that he has sent his transcript to you, begging at the same time more copy. Let him have it by all means; he is an industrious youth, and I love him dearly. I told him that you are disposed to love him a little. A new poem is born on the receipt of my mother's picture. Thou shalt have it.

W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

The Lodge, March 11, 1790.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I was glad to hear from you, for a line from you gives me always much pleasure, but was not much gladdened by the contents of your letter. The state of your health, which I have learned more accurately perhaps from my cousin, except in this last instance, than from yourself, has rather alarmed me, and even she has collected her infor-

mation upon that subject more from your looks than from your own acknowledgments To complain much and often of our indispositions does not always ensure the pity of the hearer, perhaps sometimes forfeits it; but to dissemble them altogether, or at least to suppress the worst, is attended ultimately with an inconvenience greater still; the secret will out at last, and our friends, unprepared to receive it, are doubly distressed about us In saying this I squint a little at Mrs. Unwin, who will read it; it is with her as with you, the only subject on which she practises any dissimulation at all; the consequence is, that when she is much indisposed I never believe myself in possession of the whole truth, live in constant expectation of hearing something worse, and at the long run am seldom disappointed. It seems therefore, as on all other occasions, so even in this, the better course on the whole to appear what we are; not to lay the fears of our friends asleep by cheerful looks, which do not properly belong to us, or by letters written as if we were well, when in fact we are very much otherwise. On condition however that you act differently toward me for the future, I will pardon the past, and she may gather from my clemency shown to you, some hopes, on the same conditions, of similar clemency to herself

W. C.

TO MRS. THROCKMORTON.

The Lodge, March 27, 1790.

MY DEAREST MADAM,

I SHALL only observe on the subject of your absence that you have stretched it since you went, and have made it a week longer. Weston is sadly *unked* without you; and here are two of us, who will be heartily glad to see you again. I believe you are happier at home than any where, which is a comfortable belief to your neighbours, because it affords assurance that since you are neither likely to ramble for pleasure, nor to meet with any avocations of business, while Weston shall continue to be your home, it will not often want you.

The two first books of my Iliad have been submitted to the inspection and scrutiny of a great critic of your sex, at the instance of my cousin, as you may suppose. The lady is mistress of more tongues than a few (it is to be hoped she is single), and particularly she is mistress of the Greek. She returned them with expressions that if any thing could make a poet prouder than all poets naturally are, would have made me so. I tell you this, because I know that you all interest yourselves in the success of the said Iliad.

My periwig is arrived, and is the very perfection of all periwigs, having only one fault; which is, that my head will only go into the first half of it, the other half, or the upper part of it, continuing still unoccupied. My artist in this way at Olney has however undertaken to make the whole of it tenantable, and then I shall be twenty years younger than you have ever seen me.

I heard of your birthday very early in the morning; the news came from the steeple. W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, March 22, 1790.

I REJOICE, my dearest cousin, that my MSS. have roamed the earth so successfully, and have met with no disaster. The single book excepted that went to the bottom of the Thames and rose again, they have been fortunate without exception. I am not superstitious, but have nevertheless as good a right to believe that adventure an omen, and a favourable one, as Swift had to interpret, as he did, the loss of a fine fish, which he had no sooner laid on the bank, than it flounced into the water again. This he tells us himself he always considered as a type of his future disappointments; and why may not I as well consider the marvellous recovery of my lost book from the bottom of the Thames, as typical of its future prosperity? To say the truth, I have no fears now about the success of my Translation, though in time past I have had many. I knew there was a style somewhere, could I but find it, in which Homer ought to be rendered, and which alone would suit him. Long time I blundered about it, ere I could attain to any decided judgment on the matter; at first I was betrayed by a desire of accommodating my language to the simplicity of his, into much of the quaintness that belonged to our writers of the fifteenth century. In the course of many revisals I have delivered myself from this evil, I believe, entirely; but I have done it slowly, and as a man separates himself from his mistress when he is going to marry. I had so strong a predilection in favour of this style at first, that I was crazed to find that others were not as much enamoured with it as myself. At every passage of that sort which I obliterated, I groaned bitterly, and said to myself, I am spoiling my work to please those who have no taste for the simple graces of antiquity. But in measure as I adopted a more modern phraseology, I become a convert to their opinion, and in the last revisal, which I am now making, am not sensible of having spared a single expression of the obsolete kind. I see my work so much improved by this alteration, that I am filled with wonder at my own backwardness to assent to the necessity of it, and the more when I consider that Milton, with whose manner I account myself intimately acquainted, is never quaint, never twangs through the nose, but is every where grand and elegant.

without resorting to musty antiquity for his beauties. On the contrary, he took a long stride forward, left the language of his own day far behind him, and anticipated the expressions of a century yet to come.

I have now, as I said, no longer any doubt of the event, but I will give thee a shilling if thou wilt tell me what I shall say in my preface. It is an affair of much delicacy, and I have as many opinions about it as there are whims in a weathercock.

Send my MSS. and thine when thou wilt. In a day or two I shall enter on the last Iliad. When I have finished it I shall give the Odyssey one more reading, and shall therefore shortly have occasion for the copy in thy possession; but you see that there is no need to hurry.

I leave the little space for Mrs. Unwin's use, who means, I believe, to occupy it.

And am evermore thine most truly, W. C.

Postscript in the hand of Mrs. Unwin.

You can not imagine how much your ladyship would oblige your unworthy servant, if you would be so good to let me know in what point I differ from you. All that at present I can say is, that I will readily sacrifice my own opinion, unless I can give you a substantial reason for adhering to it.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

Weston, March 23, 1790.

Your MS. arrived safe in new Norfolk Street, and I am much obliged to you for your labours. Were you now at Weston I could furnish you with employment for some weeks, and shall perhaps be equally able to do it in summer, for I have lost my best amanuensis in this place, Mr. George Throckmorton, who is gone to Bath.

You are a man to be envied, who have never read the Odyssey, which is one of the most amusing story-books in the world. There is also much of the finest poetry in the world to be found in it, notwithstanding all that Longinus has insinuated to the contrary. His comparison of the Iliad and Odyssey to the meridian, and the declining sun, is pretty, but I am persuaded, not just. The prettiness of it seduced him; he was otherwise too judicious a reader of Homer to have made it. I can find in the latter no symptoms of impaired ability, none of the effects of age; on the contrary, it seems to me a certainty, that Homer, had he written the Odyssey in his youth, could not have written it better; and if the Iliad in his old age, that he would have written it just as well. A critic would say me, that instead of *written*, I should have said *composed*. Very likely—but I am not writing to one of that snarling generation.

My boy, I long to see thee again. It has happened some way or other, that Mrs. Unwin and I have conceived a great affection for thee. That I should, is the less to be wondered at (because thou art a shred of my own mother); neither is the wonder great that she should fall into the same predicament: for she loves every thing that I love. You will observe that your own personal right to be beloved makes no part of the consideration. There is nothing that I touch with so much tenderness as the vanity of a young man; because I know how extremely he is susceptible of impressions that might hurt him in that particular part of his composition. If you should ever prove a coxcomb, from which character you stand just now at a greater distance than any young man I know, it shall never be said that I have made you one; no, you will gain nothing by me but the honour of being much valued by a poor poet, who can do you no good while he lives, and has nothing to leave you when he dies. If you can be contented to be dear to me on these conditions, so you shall; but other terms more advantageous than these, or more inviting, none have I to propose.

Farewell. Puzzle not yourself about a subject when you write to either of us; every thing is subject enough from those we love. W. C.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

Weston, April 17, 1790.

Your letter that now lies before me is almost three weeks old, and therefore of full age to receive an answer, which it shall without delay, if the interval between the present moment and that of breakfast should prove sufficient for the purpose.

Yours to Mrs. Unwin was received yesterday, for which she will thank you in due time. I have also seen, and have now in my desk your letter to Lady Hesketh; she sent it thinking it would divert me; in which she was not mistaken. I shall tell her when I write to her next, that you long to receive a line from her. Give yourself no trouble on the subject of the politic device you saw good to recur to, when you presented me with the manuscript; it was an innocent deception, at least it could harm nobody save yourself; an effect which it did not fail to produce; and since the punishment followed it so closely, by me at least it may very well be forgiven. You ask, how can I tell that you are not addicted to practices of the deceptive kind? And certainly, if the little time that I have had to study you were alone to be considered, the question would not be unreasonable,

but in general a man who reaches my years finds

> "That long experience does attain
> To something like prophetic strain."

I am very much of Lavater's opinion, and persuaded that faces are as legible as books, only with these circumstances to recommend them to our perusal, that they are read in much less time, and are much less likely to deceive us. Yours gave me a favourable impression of you the moment I beheld it, and though I shall not tell you in particular what I saw in it, for reasons mentioned in my last, I will add that I had observed in you nothing since, that has not confirmed the opinion I then formed in your favour. In fact, I can not recollect that my skill in physiognomy has ever deceived me, and I should add more on this subject, had I room.

When you have shut up your mathematical books, you must give yourself to the study of Greek; not merely that you may be able to read Homer and the other Greek classics with ease, but the Greek Testament, and the Greek fathers also. Thus qualified, and by the aid of your fiddle into the bargain, together with some portion of the grace of God (without which nothing can be done) to enable you to look well to your flock, when you shall get one, you will be well set up for a parson. In which character, if I live to see you in it, I shall expect and hope that you will make a very different figure from most of your fraternity.

Ever yours. W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, April 19, 1790.

MY DEAREST COZ,

I THANK thee for my cousin Johnson's letter, which diverted me. I had one from him lately, in which he expressed an ardent desire of a line from you, and the delight he would feel in receiving it. I know not whether you will have the charity to satisfy his longings, but mention the matter, thinking it possible that you may. A letter from a lady to a youth immersed in mathematics must be singularly pleasant.

I am finishing Homer backward, having begun at the last book, and designing to persevere in that crab-like fashion, till I arrive at the first. This may remind you perhaps of a certain poet's prisoner in the Bastile (thank Heaven! in the Bastile now no more) counting the nails in the door for variety's sake in all directions. I find so little to do in the last revisal, that I shall soon reach the Odyssey, and soon want those books of it which are in thy possession; the two first of the Iliad, which are also in thy possession, much sooner; thou must therefore send them by the first fair opportunity. I am in high spirits on this subject, and think that I have at last licked the clumsy cub into a shape that will secure to it the favourable notice of the public. Let not ——— retard me, and I shall hope to get it out next winter.

I am glad that thou hast sent the General those verses on my mother's picture. They will amuse him—only I hope that he will not miss my mother-in-law, and think that she ought to have made a third. On such an occasion it was not possible to mention her with any propriety. I rejoice at the General's recovery; may it prove a perfect one.

W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Weston, April 30, 1790.

To my old friend, Dr. Madan, thou couldst not have spoken better than thou didst. Tell him, I beseech you, that I have not forgotten him; tell him also that to my heart and home he will be always welcome; nor he only, but all that are his. His judgment of my translation gave me the highest satisfaction, because I know him to be a rare old Grecian.

The General's approbation of my picture verses gave me also much pleasure. I wrote them not without tears, therefore I presume it may be that they are felt by others. Should he offer me my father's picture, I shall gladly accept it. A melancholy pleasure is better than none, nay verily better than most. He had a sad task imposed on him, but no man could acquit himself of such a one with more discretion, or with more tenderness. The death of the unfortunate young man reminded me of those lines in Lycidas,

> It was that fatal and perfidious bark,
> Built in th' eclipse, and rigg'd with curses dark,
> That sunk so low that sacred head of thine!——

How beautiful! W. C.

TO MRS. THROCKMORTON.

The Lodge, May 10, 1790.

MY DEAR MRS. FROG,*

You have by this time (I presume) heard from the Doctor, whom I desired to present to you our best affections, and to tell you that we are well. He sent an urchin (I do not mean a hedge-hog, commonly called an urchin in old times, but a boy, commonly so called at present) expecting that he would find you at Buckland's, whither he supposed you gone on Thursday. He sent him charged with divers articles, and among others with

* The sportive title generally bestowed by Cowper on his amiable friends the Throckmortons.

letters, or at least with a letter; when I mention that if the boy should be lost, together with his despatches, past all possibility of recovery, you may yet know that the Doctor stands acquitted of not writing.—That he is utterly lost (that is to say the boy, for the Doctor being the last antecedent, as the grammarians say, you might otherwise suppose he was intended) is the more probable, because he was never four miles from his home before, having only traveled at the side of a plough-team; and when the Doctor gave him his direction to Buckland's, he asked, very naturally, if that place was in England. So what has become of him Heaven knows!

I do not know that any adventures have presented themselves since your departure worth mentioning, except that the rabbit, that infested your wilderness, has been shot for devouring your carnations; and that I myself have been in some danger of being devoured in like manner by a great dog, viz. Pearson's. But I wrote him a letter on Friday (I mean a letter to Pearson, not to his dog, which I mention to prevent mistakes—for the said last antecedent might occasion them in this place also) informing him, that unless he tied up his great mastiff in the day-time, I would send him a worse thing, commonly called and known by the name of an attorney. When I go forth to ramble in the fields, I do not sally like Don Quixote, with a purpose of encountering monsters, if any such can be found; but am a peaceable poor gentleman, and a poet, who mean nobody any harm, the fox-hunters and the two universities of this land excepted.

I can not learn from any creature whether the Turnpike bill is alive or dead. So ignorant am I, and by such ignoramuses surrounded. But if I know little else, this at least I know, that I love you, and Mr. Frog; that I long for your return, and that I am, with Mrs. Unwin's best affections,

Ever yours, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, May 28, 1790.

MY DEAREST COZ,

I THANK thee for the offer of thy best services on this occasion. But heaven guard my brows from the wreath you mention, whatever wreath beside may hereafter adorn them! It would be a leaden extinguisher clapped on all the fire of my genius, and I should never more produce a line worth reading. To speak seriously, it would make me miserable, and therefore I am sure that thou of all my friends, wouldst least wish me to wear it.

Adieu, ever thine—in Homer-hurry, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Weston, June 3, 1790.

YOU will wonder when I tell you that I, even I, am considered by people, who live at a great distance, as having interest and influence sufficient to procure a place at court for those who may happen to want one. I have accordingly been applied to within these few days by a Welshman, with a wife and many children, to get him made poet-laureat as fast as possible. If thou wouldst wish to make the world merry twice a year, thou canst not do better than to procure the office for him. I will promise thee, that he shall afford thee a hearty laugh in return, every birth day, and every new year. He is an honest man.

Adieu! W. C.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

MY DEAR JOHN, *Weston, June* 7, 1790.

YOU know my engagements, and are consequently able to account for my silence. I will not therefore waste time and paper in mentioning them, but will only say that added to those with which you are acquainted, I had other hindrances, such as business, and a disorder of my spirits, to which I have been all my life subject. At present I am, thank God! perfectly well both in mind and body. Of you I am always mindful, whether I write or not, and very desirous to see you. You will remember, I hope, that you are under engagements to us, and, as soon as your Norfolk friend can spare you, will fulfil them. Give us all the time you can, and all that they can spare to us!

You never pleased me more than when you told me you had abandoned your mathematical pursuits. It grieved me to think that you were wasting your time merely to gain a little Cambridge fame, not worth your having. I can not be contented that your renown should thrive nowhere but on the banks of the Cam. Conceive a nobler ambition, and never let your honour be circumscribed by the paltry dimensions of an university? It is well that you have already, as you observe, acquired sufficient information in that science, to enable you to pass creditably such examinations as I suppose you must hereafter undergo. Keep what you have gotten, and be content. More is needless.

You could not apply to a worse than I am to advise you concerning your studies. I was never a regular student myself, but lost the most valuable years of my life in an attorney's office, and in the Temple. I will not therefore give myself airs, and affect to know what I know not. The affair

is of great importance to you, and you should be directed in it by a wiser than I. To speak however in very general terms on the subject, it seems to me that your chief concern is with history, natural philosophy, logic, and divinity. As to metaphysics, I know little about them. But the very little that I do know has not taught me to admire them. Life is too short to afford time even for serious trifles. Pursue what you know to be attainable, make truth your object, and your studies will make you a wise man! Let your divinity, if I may advise, be the divinity of the glorious Reformation: I mean in contradistinction to Arminianism, and all the *isms* that were ever broached in this world of error and ignorance.

The divinity of the Reformation is called Calvinism, but injuriously. It has been that of the church of Christ in all ages. It is the divinity of St. Paul, and of St. Paul's master, who met him in the way to Damascus.

I have written in great haste, that I might finish if possible before breakfast. Adieu! Let us see you soon; the sooner the better. Give my love to the silent lady, the Rose, and all my friends around you. W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

The Lodge, June 8, 1790.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Among the many who love and esteem you, there is none who rejoices more in your felicity than myself. Far from blaming, I commend you much for connecting yourself, young as you are, with a well-chosen companion for life. Entering on the state with uncontaminated morals, you have the best possible prospect of happiness, and will be secure against a thousand and ten thousand temptations, to which, at an early period of life, in such a Babylon as you must necessarily inhabit, you would otherwise have been exposed. I see it too in the light you do, as likely to be advantageous to you in your profession. Men of business have a better opinion of a candidate for employment, who is married, because he has given bond to the world, as you observe, and to himself, for diligence, industry, and attention. It is altogether therefore a subject of much congratulation: and mine, to which I add Mrs. Unwin's, is very sincere. Samson at his marriage proposed a riddle to the Philistines. I am no Samson, neither are you a Philistine. Yet expound to me the following, if you can.

What are they, which stand at a distance from each other, and meet without ever moving?

Should you be so fortunate as to guess it, you may propose it to the company, when you celebrate your nuptials; and if you can win thirty changes of raiment by it, as Samson did by his, let me tell you, they will be no contemptible acquisition to a young beginner.

You will not, I hope, forget your way to Weston, in consequence of your marriage, where you and yours will be always welcome. W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, June 17, 1790

MY DEAREST COZ,

Here am I, at eight in the morning, in full dress, going a visiting to Chicheley. We are a strong party, and fill two chaises; Mrs. F. the elder, and Mrs. G. in one; Mrs. F. the younger, and myself in another. Were it not that I shall find Chesters at the end of my journey, I should be inconsolable. That expectation alone supports my spirits; and even with this prospect before me, when I saw this moment a poor old woman coming up the lane opposite my window, I could not help sighing, and saying to myself—"Poor, but happy old woman! thou art exempted by thy situation in life from riding in chaises, and making thyself fine in a morning, happier therefore in my account than I, who am under the cruel necessity of doing both. Neither dost thou write verses, neither hast thou ever heard of the name of Homer, whom I am miserable to abandon for a whole morning!" This, and more of the same sort, passed in my mind on seeing the old woman above said.

The troublesome business, with which I filled my last letter, is (I hope) by this time concluded, and Mr. Archdeacon satisfied. I can, to be sure, but ill afford to pay fifty pounds for another man's negligence, but would be happy to pay a hundred rather than be treated as if I were insolvent; threatened with attorneys and bums. One would think that, living where I live, I might be exempted from trouble. But alas! as the philosophers often affirm, there is no nook under heaven in which trouble can not enter; and perhaps had there never been one philosopher in the world, this is a truth that would not have been always altogether a secret.

I have made two inscriptions lately at the request of Thomas Gifford, Esq. who is sowing twenty acres with acorns on one side of his house, and twenty acres with ditto on the other. He erects two memorials of stone on the occasion, that when posterity shall be curious to know the age of the oaks, their curiosity may be gratified.*

My works therefore will not all perish, or will not all perish soon, for he has ordered his lapidary to cut the characters very deep, and in stone extremely hard. It is not in vain then, that I have

* The Inscriptions were inserted here. See Poems.

so long exercised the business of a poet. I shall at least reap the reward of my labours, and be immortal probably for many years.

Ever thine, W. C.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Weston, June* 22, 1790.

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Villoison makes no mention of the serpent, whose skin, or bowels, or perhaps both, were honoured with the Iliad and Odyssey inscribed upon them. But I have conversed with a living eye-witness of an African serpent long enough to have afforded skin and guts for the purpose. In Africa there are ants also, which frequently destroy those monsters. They are not much larger than ours, but they travel in a column of immense length, and eat through every thing that opposes them. Their bite is like a spark of fire. When these serpents have killed their prey, lion or tiger or any other large animal, before they swallow him, they take a considerable circuit round about the carcase, to see if the ants are coming, because when they have gorged their prey, they are unable to escape them. They are nevertheless sometimes surprised by them in their unwieldy state, and the ants make a passage through them. Now if you thought your own story of Homer, bound in snake-skin, worthy of three notes of admiration, you can not do less than add six to mine, confessing at the same time, that if I put you to the expense of a letter, I do not make you pay your money for nothing. But this account I had from a person of most unimpeached veracity.

I rejoice with you in the good Bishop's removal to St. Asaph, and especially because the Norfolk parsons much more resemble the ants above-mentioned, than he the serpent. He is neither of vast size, nor unwieldy, nor voracious; neither, I dare say, does he sleep after dinner, according to the practice of the said serpent. But, harmless as he is, I am mistaken if his mutinous clergy did not sometimes disturb his rest, and if he did not find their bite, though they could not actually eat through him, in a degree resembling fire. Good men like him, and peaceable, should have good and peaceable folks to deal with, and I heartily wish him such in his new diocese. But if he will keep the clergy to their business, he shall have trouble, let him go where he may; and this is boldly spoken, considering that I speak it to one of that reverend body. But ye are like Jeremiah's basket of figs. Some of you could not be better, and some of you are stark naught. Ask the bishop himself, if this be not true! W. C.

TO MRS. BODHAM.

The Lodge, June 29, 1790.

MY DEAREST COUSIN,

It is true that I did sometimes complain to Mrs. Unwin of your long silence. But it is likewise true, that I made many excuses for you in my own mind, and did not feel myself at all inclined to be angry, nor even much to wonder. There is an awkwardness, and a difficulty in writing to those whom distance and length of time have made in a manner new to us, that naturally gives us a check, when we would otherwise be glad to address them. But a time, I hope, is near at hand, when you and I shall be effectually delivered from all such constraints, and correspond as fluently as if our intercourse had suffered much less interruption.

You must not suppose, my dear, that though I may be said to have lived many years with a pen in my hand, I am myself altogether at my ease on this tremendous occasion. Imagine rather, and you will come nearer to the truth, that when I placed this sheet before me I asked myself more than once, "how shall I fill it?" One subject indeed presents itself, the pleasant prospect that opens upon me of our coming once more together, but that once exhausted, with what shall I proceed? Thus I questioned myself; but finding neither end nor profit of such questions, I bravely resolved to dismiss them all at once, and to engage in the great enterprise of a letter to my quondam Rose at a venture———There is great truth in a rant of Nat. Lee's, or of Dryden's, I know not which, who makes an enamoured youth say to his mistress,

> And nonsense shall be eloquence in love.

For certain it is, that they who truly love one another are not very nice examiners of each other's style or matter; if an epistle comes, it is always welcome, though it be perhaps neither so wise nor so witty as one might have wished to make it. And now, my cousin, let me tell thee how much I feel myself obliged to Mr. Bodham, for the readiness he expresses to accept my invitation. Assure him that, stranger as he is to me at present, and natural as the dread of strangers has ever been to me, I shall yet receive him with open arms, because he is your husband, and loves you dearly That consideration alone will endear him to me, and I dare say that I shall not find it his only recommendation to my best affections. May the health of his relation (his mother, I suppose) be soon restored, and long continued, and may nothing melancholy, of what kind soever, interfere to prevent our joyful meeting. Between the present moment and September our house is clear for your reception, and you have nothing to do but to give

us a day or two's notice of your coming. In September we expect Lady Hesketh, and I only regret that our house is not large enough to hold all together, for were it possible that you could meet, you would love each other.

Mrs. Unwin bids me offer you her best love. She is never well, but always patient, and always cheerful, and feels beforehand that she shall be loth to part with you.

My love to all the dear Donnes of every name!—write soon, no matter about what. W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

July 7, 1790.

Instead of beginning with the saffron-vested morning, to which Homer invites me, on a morning that has no saffron vest to boast, I shall begin with you.

It is irksome to us both to wait so long as we must for you, but we are willing to hope that by a longer stay you will make us amends for all this tedious procrastination.

Mrs. Unwin has made known her whole case to Mr. Gregson, whose opinion of it has been very consolatory to me: he says indeed it is a case perfectly out of the reach of all physical aid, but at the same time not at all dangerous. Constant pain is a sad grievance, whatever part is affected, and she is hardly ever free from an aching head, as well as an uneasy side, but patience is an anodyne of God's own preparation, and of that he gives her largely.

The French, who like all lively folks are extreme in every thing, are such in their zeal for freedom; and if it were possible to make so noble a cause ridiculous, their manner of promoting it could not fail to do so. Princes and peers reduced to plain gentlemanship, and gentles reduced to a level with their own lackeys, are excesses of which they will repent hereafter. Difference of rank and subordination are, I believe, of God's appointment, and consequently essential to the well-being of society: but what we mean by fanaticism in religion is exactly that which animates their politics; and unless time should sober them, they will, after all, be an unhappy people. Perhaps it deserves not much to be wondered at, that at their first escape from tyrannic shackles they should act extravagantly, and treat their kings as they have sometimes treated their idols. To these however they are reconciled in due time again, but their respect for monarchy is at an end. They want nothing now but a little English sobriety, and that they want extremely: I heartily wish them some wit in their anger, for it were great pity that so many millions should be miserable for want of it.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

My dear Johnny, *Weston, July* 8, 1790.

You do well to perfect yourself on the violin. Only beware, that an amusement so very bewitching as music, especially when we produce it ourselves, do not steal from you all those hours, that should be given to study. I can be well content, that it should serve you as a refreshment after severer exercises, but not that it should engross you wholly. Your own good sense will most probably dictate to you this precaution, and I might have spared you the trouble of it; but I have a degree of zeal for your proficiency in more important pursuits, that would not suffer me to suppress it.

Having delivered my conscience by giving you this sage admonition, I will convince you that I am a censor not over and above severe, by acknowledging in the next place that I have known very good performers on the violin very learned also; and my cousin, Dr. Spencer Madan, is an instance.

I am delighted that you have engaged your sister to visit us; for I say to myself, if John be amiable, what must Catharine be? For we males, be we angelic as we may, are always surpassed by the ladies. But know this, that I shall not be in love with either of you, if you stay with us only a few days, for you talk of a week or so. Correct this erratum, I beseech you, and convince us by a much longer continuance here, that it was one.

W. C.

Mrs. Unwin has never been well since you saw her. You are not passionately fond of letter-writing, I perceive, who have dropped a lady; but you will be a loser by the bargain; for one letter of hers in point of real utility, and sterling value, is worth twenty of mine, and you will never have another from her, till you have earned it.

W. C.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

Weston, July 31, 1790.

You have by this time, I presume, answered Lady Hesketh's letter? If not, answer it without delay; and this injunction I give you, judging that it may not be entirely unnecessary; for though I have seen you but once, and only for two or three days, I have found out that you are a scatter-brain. I made the discovery perhaps the sooner, because in this you very much resemble myself, who in the course of my life have, through mere carelessness and inattention, lost many advan-

tages: and insuperable shyness has also deprived me of many. And here again there is a resemblance between us. You will do well to guard against both, for of both, I believe, you have a considerable share as well as myself.

We long to see you again, and are only concerned at the short stay you propose to make with us. If time should seem as short to you at Weston, as it seems to us, your visit here will be gone "as a dream when one awaketh, or as a watch in the night."

It is a life of dreams, but the pleasantest one naturally wishes longest.

I shall find employment for you, having made already some part of the fair copy of the Odyssey a foul one. I am revising it for the last time, and spare nothing that I can mend.* The Iliad is finished.

If you have Donne's poems, bring them with you, for I have not seen them many years, and should like to look them over.

You may treat us too, if you please, with a little of your music, for I seldom hear any, and delight much in it. You need not fear a rival, for we have but two fiddles in the neighbourhood—one a gardener's, the other a tailor's: terrible performers both! W. C.

[TO MR. JOHNSON.]

Sept. 7, 1790.

It grieves me that after all I am obliged to go into public without the whole advantage of Mr. Fuseli's judicious strictures. My only consideration is, that I have not forfeited them by my own impatience. Five years are no small portion of a man's life, especially at the latter end of it; and in those five years, being a man of almost no engagements, I have done more in the way of hard work, than most could have done in twice the number. I beg you to present my compliments to Mr. Fuseli, with many and sincere thanks for the services that his own more important occupations would allow him to render me.

TO MRS. BODHAM.

MY DEAREST COUSIN, *Weston, Sept.* 9, 1790.

I am truly sorry to be forced after all to resign the hope of seeing you and Mr. Bodham at Weston this year; the next may possibly be more propitious, and I heartily wish it may. Poor Catharine's unseasonable indisposition has also cost us a disappointment, which we much regret; and were it not that Johnny has made shift to reach us, we should think ourselves completely unfortunate. But him we have, and him we will hold as long as we can, so expect not very soon to see him in Norfolk. He is so harmless, cheerful, gentle, and good-tempered, and I am so entirely at my ease with him, that I can not surrender him without a *needs must*, even to those who have a superior claim upon him. He left us yesterday morning, and whither do you think he is gone, and on what errand? Gone, as sure as you are alive, to London, and to convey my Homer to the bookseller's. But he will return the day after to-morrow, and I mean to part with him no more, till necessity shall force us asunder. Suspect me not, my cousin, of being such a monster as to have imposed this task myself on your kind nephew, or even to have thought of doing it. It happened that one day, as we chatted by the fireside, I expressed a wish, that I could hear of some trusty body going to London, to whose care I might consign my voluminous labours, the work of five years. For I purpose never to visit that city again myself, and should have been uneasy to have left a charge, of so much importance to me, altogether to the care of a stage-coachman. Johnny had no sooner heard my wish, than offering himself to the service, he fulfilled it, and his offer was made in such terms, and accompanied with a countenance and manner expressive of so much alacrity, that unreasonable as I thought it at first, to give him so much trouble, I soon found that I should mortify him by a refusal. He is gone therefore with a box full of poetry, of which I think nobody will plunder him. He has only to say what it is, and there is no commodity I think a freebooter would covet less. W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

The Lodge, Sept. 13, 1790.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Your letter was particularly welcome to me, not only because it came after a long silence, but because it brought me good news—news of your marriage, and consequently, I trust, of your happiness. May that happiness be durable as your lives, and may you be the *Felices ter et amplius* of whom Horace sings so sweetly! This is my sincere wish, and, though expressed in prose, shall serve as your epithalamium. You comfort me when you say that your marriage will not deprive us of the sight of you hereafter. If you do not wish that I should regret your union, you must make that assurance good as often as you have opportunity.

* The revisal was completed on the 25th of August following; five years and one month (exclusive of the period of illness before-mentioned) from the writer's entering on the translation of Homer.

After perpetual versification during five years, I find myself at last a vacant man, and reduced to read for my amusement. My Homer is gone to the press, and you will imagine that I feel a void in consequence. The proofs however will be coming soon, and I shall avail myself, with all my force, of this last opportunity, to make my work as perfect as I wish it. I shall not therefore be long time destitute of employment, but shall have sufficient to keep me occupied all the winter, and part of the ensuing spring, for Johnson purposes to publish either in March, April, or May—my very preface is finished. It did not cost me much trouble, being neither long nor learned. I have spoken my mind as freely as decency would permit on the subject of Pope's version, allowing him, at the same time, all the merit to which I think him entitled. I have given my reasons for translating in blank verse, and hold some discourse on the mechanism of it, chiefly with a view to obviate the prejudices of some people against it. I expatiate a little on the manner in which I think Homer ought to be rendered, and in which I have endeavoured to render him myself, and anticipated two or three cavils, to which I foresee that I shall be liable from the ignorant, or uncandid, in order, if possible, to prevent them. These are the chief heads of my preface, and the whole consists of about twelve pages.

It is possible when I come to treat with Johnson about the copy, I may want some person to negotiate for me; and knowing no one so intelligent as yourself in books, or so well qualified to estimate their just value, I shall beg leave to resort to and rely on you as my negotiator. But I will not trouble you unless I should see occasion. My cousin was the bearer of my MSS. to London. He went on purpose, and returns to-morrow. Mrs. Unwin's affectionate felicitations, added to my own, conclude me,

My dear friend, sincerely yours, W. C.

The trees of a colonnade will solve my riddle.

[TO MR. JOHNSON.]

Weston, Oct. 3, 1790.

Mr. Newton having again requested that the preface which he wrote for my first volume may be prefixed to it, I am desirous to gratify him in a particular that so emphatically bespeaks his friendship for me; and should my books see another edition, shall be obliged to you if you will add it accordingly.

I beg that you will not suffer your reverence either for Homer, or his translator, to check your continual examinations. I never knew with certainty, till now, that the marginal strictures found in the Task proofs were yours. The justness of them, and the benefit I derived from them are fresh in my memory, and I doubt not that their utility will be the same in the present instance.*

Weston, Oct. 30, 1790

TO MRS. BODHAM.

my dear coz, *Weston, Nov.* 21, 1790.

Our kindness to your nephew is no more than he must entitle himself to wherever he goes. His amiable disposition and manners will never fail to secure him a warm place in the affection of all who know him. The advice I gave respecting his poem on Audley End was dictated by my love of him, and a sincere desire of his success. It is one thing to write what may please our friends, who, because they are such, are apt to be a little biased in our favour; and another to write what may please every body; because they who have no connexion, or even knowledge of the author, will be sure to find fault if they can. My advice, however salutary and necessary as it seemed to me, was such as I dared not give to a poet of less diffidence than he. Poets are to a proverb irritable, and he is the only one I ever knew, who seems to have no spark of that fire about him. He has left us about a fortnight, and sorry we were to lose him; but had he been my son, he must have gone, and I could not have regretted him more. If his sister be still with you, present my love to her, and tell her how much I wish to see them at Weston together.

Mrs. Hewitt probably remembers more of my childhood, than I can recollect either of hers or my own; but this I recollect, that the days of that period were happy days, compared with most I have seen since. There are few perhaps in the world, who have not cause to look back with regret on the days of infancy; yet, to say the truth, I suspect some deception in this. For infancy itself has its cares; and though we can not now conceive how trifles could affect us much, it is certain that they did. Trifles they appear now, but such they were not then. W. C.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

MY BIRTH-DAY.

Friday, Nov. 26, 1790.

my dearest johnny,

I am happy that you have escaped from the claws

* I am anxious to preserve this singular anecdote; as it is honourable both to the modest poet, and to his intelligent bookseller. *Hayley.*

of Euclid into the bosom of Justinian. It is useful I suppose to *every* man, to be well grounded in the principles of jurisprudence; and I take it to be a branch of science that bids much fairer to enlarge the mind, and give an accuracy of reasoning, that all the mathematics in the world. Mind your studies, and you will soon be wiser than I can hope to be.

We had a visit on Monday, from one of the first women in the world; in point of character, I mean, and accomplishments, the dowager lady Spencer! I may receive perhaps some honours hereafter, should my translation speed according to my wishes, and the pains I have taken with it; but shall never receive any that I shall esteem so highly. She is indeed worthy to whom I should dedicate, and may but my Odyssey prove as worthy of her, I shall have nothing to fear from the critics. Yours, my dear Johnny,

With much affection, W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

The Lodge, Nov. 30, 1790.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I WILL confess that I thought your letter somewhat tardy, though at the same time I made every excuse for you, except, as it seems, the right. *That* indeed was out of the reach of all possible conjecture. I could not guess that your silence was occasioned by your being occupied with either thieves or thief-takers. Since however the cause was such, I rejoice that your labours were not in vain, and that the freebooters who had plundered your friend, are safe in limbo. I admire too, as much as I rejoice in your success, the indefatigable spirit that prompted you to pursue, with such unremitting perseverance, an object not to be reached but at the expense of infinite trouble, and that must have led you into an acquaintance with scenes and characters the most horrible to a mind like yours. I see in this conduct the zeal and firmness of your friendship to whomsoever professed; and though I wanted not a proof of it myself, contemplate so unequivocal an indication of what you really are, and of what I always believed you to be, with much pleasure. May you rise from the condition of an humble prosecutor, or witness, to the bench of judgment!

When your letter arrived, it found me with the worst and most obstinate cold that I ever caught. This was one reason why it had not a speedier answer. Another is, that, except Tuesday morning, there is none in the week in which I am not engaged in the last revisal of my translation; the revisal I mean of my proof-sheets. To this business I give myself with an assiduity and attention truly admirable, and set an example, which if other poets could be apprised of, they would do well to follow. Miscarriages in authorship (I am persuaded) are as often to be ascribed to want of painstaking, as to want of ability.

Lady Hesketh, Mrs. Unwin, and myself often mention you, and always in terms, that though you would blush to hear them, you need not be ashamed of; at the same time wishing much that you could change our trio into a quartetto. W. C.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Weston, Dec.* 1, 1790.

IT is plain that you understand trap, as we used to say at school: for you begin with accusing me of long silence, conscious yourself at the same time that you have been half a year in my debt, or thereabout. But I will answer your accusations with a boast, with a boast of having intended many a day to write to you again, notwithstanding your long insolvency. Your brother and sister of Chicheley can both witness for me that, weeks since, I testified such an intention; and if I did not execute it, it was not for want of good will, but for want of leisure. When will you be able to glory of such designs, so liberal and magnificent, you, who have nothing to do by your own confession but to grow fat and saucy? Add to all this, that I have had a violent cold, such as I never have but at the first approach of winter, and such as at that time I seldom escape. A fever accompanied it, and an incessant cough.

You measure the speed of printers, of my printer at least, rather by your own wishes than by any just standard. Mine (I believe) is as nimble a one as falls to the share of poets in general, though not nimble enough to satisfy either the author or his friends. I told you that my work would go to press in autumn, and so it did. But it had been six weeks in London ere the press began to work upon it. About a month since we began to print, and at the rate of nine sheets in a fortnight have proceeded to about the middle of the sixth Iliad. "No further?" you say, I answer—No, nor even so far, without much scolding on my part both at the bookseller and the printer. But courage, my friend! Fair and softly as we proceed, we shall find our way through at last; and in confirmation of this hope, while I write this, another sheet arrives. I expect to publish in the spring.

I love and thank you for the ardent desire you express to hear me bruited abroad, *el per ora virûm volitantem.* For your encouragement I will tell you that I read, myself at least, with wonderful complacence what I have done; and if the world, when it shall appear, do not like it as well as I, we will both say and swear with Fluellin, that it

is an ass and a fool (look you!) and a prating coxcomb.

I felt no ambition of the laurel. Else, though vainly perhaps, I had friends who would have made a stir on my behalf on that occasion. I confess that when I learned the new condition of the office, that odes were no longer required, and that the salary was increased, I felt not the same dislike of it. But I could neither go to court, nor could I kiss hands, were it for a much more valuable consideration. Therefore never expect to hear that royal favours find out me!

Adieu, my dear old friend! I will send you a mortuary copy soon, and in the mean time remain,

Ever yours, W. C.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

Weston, Dec. 18, 1790.

I perceive myself so flattered by the instances of illustrious success mentioned in your letter, that I feel all the amiable modesty, for which I was once so famous, sensibly giving way to a spirit of vain glory.

The King's College subscription makes me proud—the effect that my verses have had on your two young friends, the mathematicians, makes me proud; and I am, if possible, prouder still of the contents of the letter that you enclosed.

You complained of being stupid, and sent me one of the cleverest letters. I have not complained of being stupid, and have sent you one of the dullest. But it is no matter; I never aim at any thing above the pitch of every day's scribble, when I write to those I love.

Homer proceeds, my boy! We shall get through it in time, and (I hope) by the time appointed. We are now in the tenth Iliad. I expect the ladies every minute to breakfast. You have their best love. Mine attends the whole army of Donnes at Mattishall Green assembled. How happy should I find myself, were I but one of the party! My capering days are over. But do you caper for me, that you may give them some idea of the happiness I should feel, were I in the midst of them!

W. C.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Weston, Jan* 4, 1791.

You would long since have received an answer to your last, had not the wicked Clerk of Northampton delayed to send me the printed copy of my annual dirge, which I waited to enclose. Here it is at last, and much good may it do the readers!

I have regretted that I could not write sooner, especially because it well became me to reply as soon as possible to your kind inquiries after my health, which has been both better and worse since I wrote last. The cough was cured, or nearly so, when I received your letter, but I have lately been afflicted with a nervous fever, a malady formidable to me above all others, on account of the terror and dejection of spirits, that in my case always accompany it. I even looked forward, for this reason, to the month now current, with the most miserable apprehensions, for in this month the distemper has twice seized me I wish to be thankful however to the sovereign Dispenser both of health and sickness, that, though I have felt cause enough to tremble, he gives me now encouragement to hope that I may dismiss my fears, and expect, for this January at least, to escape it.

* * * * * * *

The mention of quantity reminds me of a remark that I have seen somewhere, possibly in Johnson, to this purport, that the syllables in our language being neither long nor short, our verse accordingly is less beautiful than the verse of the Greeks or Romans, because requiring less artifice in its construction. But I deny the fact, and am ready to depose on oath, that I find every syllable as distinguishably and clearly either long or short, in our language, as in any other. I know also that without an attention to the quantity of our syllables, good verse can not possibly be written; and that ignorance of this matter is one reason why we see so much that is good for nothing. The movement of a verse is always either shuffling or graceful, according to our management in this particular, and Milton gives almost as many proofs of it in his Paradise Lost as there are lines in the poem. Away therefore with all such unfounded observations! I would not give a farthing for many bushels of them—nor you perhaps for this letter. Yet upon recollection, forasmuch as I know you to be a dear lover of literary gossip, I think it possible you may esteem it highly.

Believe me, my dear friend, most truly yours,

W. C

[TO MR. JOHNSON.*]

Note by the Editor.

This extract is, in fact, entitled to a much earlier place in the collection; but having a common subject with the concluding paragraph of the preceding Letter, it seemed to call for insertion immediately after it.

I did not write in the line, that has been tam-

*It happened that some accidental reviser of the manuscript had taken the liberty to alter a line in a poem of Cowper's:—This liberty drew from the offended poet the following very just and animated remonstrance, which I am anxious to preserve, because it elucidates, with great felicity of expression, his deliberate ideas on English versification. *Hayley*

pered with, hastily, or without due attention to the construction of it; and what appeared to me its only merit is, in its present state, entirely annihilated.

I know that the ears of modern verse-writers are delicate to an excess, and their readers are troubled with the same squeamishness as themselves. So that if a line do not run as smooth as quicksilver they are offended. A critic of the present day serves a poem as a cook serves a dead turkey, when she fastens the legs of it to a post, and draws out all the sinews. For this we may thank Pope; but unless we could imitate him in the closeness and compactness of his expression, as well as in the smoothness of his numbers, we had better drop the imitation, which serves no other purpose than to emasculate and weaken all we write. Give me a manly, rough line, with a deal of meaning in it, rather than a whole poem full of musical periods, that have nothing but their oily smoothness to recommend them!

I have said thus much, as I hinted in the beginning, because I have just finished a much longer poem than the last, which our common friend will receive by the same messenger that has the charge of this letter. In that poem there are many lines, which an ear, so nice as the gentleman's who made the above-mentioned alteration, would undoubtedly condemn; and yet (if I may be permitted to say it) they can not be made smoother without being the worse for it. There is a roughness on a plum, which nobody that understands fruit, would rub off, though the plum would be much more polished without it. But lest I tire you, I will only add, that I wish you to guard me from all such meddling; assuring you, that I always write as smoothly as I can; but that I never did, never will sacrifice the spirit or sense of a passage to the sound of it

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

Weston, Jan. 21, 1791.

I know that you have already been catechised by Lady Hesketh on the subject of your return hither before the winter shall be over, and shall therefore only say that if you can come, we shall be happy to receive you. Remember also, that nothing can excuse the nonperformance of a promise but absolute necessity! In the mean time my faith in your veracity is such, that I am persuaded you will suffer nothing less than necessity to prevent it. Were you not extremely pleasant to us, and just the sort of youth that suits us, we should neither of us have said half so much, or perhaps a word on the subject.

Yours, my dear Johnny, are vagaries that I shall never see practised by any other; and whether you slap your ancle, or reel as if you were fuddled, or dance in the path before me, all is characteristic of yourself, and therefore to me delightful. I have hinted to you indeed sometimes, that you should be cautious of indulging antic habits and singularities of all sorts, and young men in general have need enough of such admonition. But yours are a sort of fairy habits, such as might belong to Puck or Robin Goodfellow, and therefore, good as the advice is, I should be half sorry should you take it.

This allowance at least I give you. Continue to take your walks, if walks they may be called, exactly in their present fashion, till you have taken orders! Then, indeed, forasmuch as a skipping, curveting, bounding divine might be a spectacle not altogether seemly, I shall consent to your adoption of a more grave demeanour. W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

my dear friend, *The Lodge, Feb.* 5, 1791.

My letters to you were all either petitionary, or in the style of acknowledgments and thanks, and such nearly in an alternate order. In my last I loaded you with commissions, for the due discharge of which I am now to say, and say truly, how much I feel myself obliged to you; neither can I stop there, but must thank you likewise for new honours from Scotland, which have left me nothing to wish for from that country; for my list is now I believe graced with the subscription of all its learned bodies. I regret only that some of them arrived too late to do honour to my present publication of names. But there are those among them and from Scotland too, that may give an useful hint perhaps to our own universities. Your very handsome present of Pope's Homer has arrived safe, notwithstanding an accident that befel him by the way. The Hall-servant brought the parcel from Olney, resting it on the pommel of the saddle, and his horse fell with him. Pope was in consequence rolled in the dirt, but being well coated got no damage. If augurs and soothsayers were not out of fashion, I should have consulted one or two of that order, in hope of learning from them that this fall was ominous. I have found a place for him in the parlour, where he makes a splendid appearance, and where he shall not long want a neighbour, one who, if less popular than himself, shall at least look as big as he. How has it happened that, since Pope did certainly dedicate both Iliad and Odyssey, no dedication is found in this first edition of them? W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Feb. 13, 1791.

I CAN now send you a full and true account of this business. Having learned that your inn at Woburn was the George, we sent Samuel thither yesterday. Mr. Martin, master of the George, told him * * * * * * * * * * * *‡

W. C.

P. S. I can not help adding a circumstance that will divert you. Martin, having learned from Sam whose servant he was, told him that he had never seen Mr. Cowper, but he had heard him frequently spoken of by the companies that had called at his house, and therefore, when Sam would have paid for his breakfast, would take nothing from him. Who says that fame is only empty breath? On the contrary, it is good ale, and cold beef into the bargain.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

Weston Underwood, Feb. 26, 1791.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

It is a maxim of much weight,
Worth conning o'er and o'er,
He, who has Homer to translate,
Had need do nothing more.

BUT notwithstanding the truth and importance of this apophthegm, to which I lay claim as the original author of it, it is not equally true that my application to Homer, close as it is, has been the sole cause of my delay to answer you. No. In observing so long a silence I have been influenced much more by a vindictive purpose, a purpose to punish you for your suspicion that I could possibly feel myself hurt or offended by any critical suggestion of yours that seemed to reflect on the purity of my nonsense verses. Understand, if you please, for the future, that whether I disport myself in Greek or Latin, or in whatsoever other language, you are hereby, henceforth, and for ever, entitled and warranted to take any liberties with it to which you shall feel yourself inclined, not excepting even the lines themselves which stand at the head of this letter!

You delight me when you call *blank* verse the English *heroic;* for I have always thought, and often said, that we have no other verse worthy to be so entitled. When you read my Preface, you will be made acquainted with my sentiments on this subject pretty much at large; for which reason I will curb my zeal, and say the less about it at present. That Johnson, who wrote harmoniously in rhyme, should have had so defective an ear as never to have discovered any music at all in blank verse, till he heard a particular friend of his reading it, is a wonder never sufficiently to be wondered at. Yet this is true on his own acknowledgment, and amounts to a plain confession (of which perhaps he was not aware when he made it) that he did not know how to read blank verse himself. In short, he either suffered prejudice to lead him in a string whithersoever it would, or his taste in poetry was worth little. I don't believe he ever read any thing of that kind with enthusiasm in his life: and as good poetry can not be composed without a considerable share of that quality in the mind of the author, so neither can it be read or tasted as it ought to be without it.

I have said all this in the morning fasting, but am soon going to my tea. When, therefore, I shall have told you that we are now, in the course of our printing, in the second book of the Odyssey, I shall only have time to add, that

I am, my dear friend,
Most truly yours, W. C.

I think your Latin quotations very applicable to the present state of France. But France is in a situation new and untried before.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

Feb. 27, 1791.

Now, my dearest Johnny, I must tell thee in few words how much I love and am obliged to thee for thy affectionate services.

My Cambridge honours are all to be ascribed to you, and to you only. Yet you are but a little man; and a little man into the bargain who have kicked the mathematics, their idol, out of your study. So important are the endings which Providence frequently connects with small beginnings. Had you been here, I could have furnished you with much employment; for I have so dealt with your fair MSS. in the course of my polishing and improving, that I have almost blotted out the whole. Such, however, as it is, I must now send it to the printer, and he must be content with it, for there is not time to make a fresh copy. We are now printing the second book of the Odyssey.

Should the Oxonians bestow none of their notice on me on this occasion, it will happen singularly enough, that as Pope received all his university honours in the subscription way from Oxford, and none at all from Cambridge, so I shall have received all mine from Cambridge, and none from Oxford. This is the more likely to be the case, because I understand that on whatsoever occasion

‡ This letter contained the history of a servant's cruelty to a posthorse, which a reader of humanity could not wish to see in print. But the postscript describes so pleasantly the signal influence of a poet's reputation on the spirit of a liberal innkeeper, that it surely ought not to be suppressed. *Hayley.*

either of those learned bodies thinks fit to move, the other always makes it a point to sit still, thus proving its superiority.

I shall send up your letter to Lady Hesketh in a day or two, knowing that the intelligence contained in it will afford her the greatest pleasure. Know likewise for your own gratification, that all the Scotch universities have subscribed, none excepted.

We are all as well as usual; that is to say, as well as reasonable folks expect to be on the crazy side of this frail existence.

I rejoice that we shall so soon have you again at our fireside. W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

Weston, March 6, 1791.

AFTER all this ploughing and sowing on the plains of Troy, once fruitful, such at least to my translating predecessor, some harvest I hope will arise for me also. My long work has received its last, last touches; and I am now giving my preface its final adjustment. We are in the fourth Odyssey in the course of our printing, and I expect that I and the swallows shall appear together. They have slept all the winter, but I, on the contrary, have been extremely busy. Yet if I can "*virûm volitare per ora*" as swiftly as they through the air, I shall account myself well requited.

Adieu! W. C.

TO THE REV. MR. HURDIS.

SIR, *Weston, March* 6, 1791.

I HAVE always entertained, and have occasionally avowed, a great degree of respect for the abilities of the unknown author of the Village Curate, unknown at that time, but now well known, and not to me only, but to many. For before I was favoured with your obliging letter, I knew your name, your place of abode, your profession, and that you had four sisters; all which I learned neither from our bookseller, nor from any of his connexions; you will perceive, therefore, that you are no longer an author incognito. The writer indeed of many passages that have fallen from your pen could not long continue so. Let genius, true genius, conceal itself where it may, we may say of it, as the young man in Terence of his beautiful mistress, "*Diu latere non potest.*"

I am obliged to you for your kind offers of service, and will not say that I shall not be troublesome to you hereafter; but at present I have no need to be so. I have within these two days given the very last stroke of my pen to my long Translation, and what will be my next career I know not. At any rate we shall not, I hope, hereafter be known to each other as poets only, for your writings have made me ambitious of a nearer approach to you. Your door, however, will never be opened to me. My fate and fortune have combined with my natural disposition to draw a circle round me which I can not pass; nor have I been more than thirteen miles from home these twenty years, and so far very seldom. But you are a younger man, and therefore may not be quite so immoveable; in which case, should you choose at any time to move Weston-ward, you will always find me happy to receive you; and in the mean time I remain, with much respect,

Your most obedient servant, critic, and friend,
W. C.

P. S. I wish to know what you mean to do with Sir Thomas.* For though I expressed doubts about his theatrical possibilities, I think him a very respectable person, and with some improvement well worthy of being introduced to the public.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

March 10, 1791.

GIVE my affectionate remembrances to your sisters, and tell them I am impatient to entertain them with my old story new dressed.

I have two French prints hanging in my study, both on Iliad subjects; and I have an English one in the parlour, on a subject from the same poem. In one of the former, Agamemnon addresses Achilles exactly in the attitude of a dancing-master turning miss in a minuet; in the latter the figures are plain, and the attitudes plain also. This is, in some considerable measure I believe, the difference between my translation and Pope's; and will serve as an exemplification of what I am going to lay before you and the public. W. C.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Weston, March* 18, 1791.

I GIVE you joy that you are about to receive some more of my elegant prose, and I feel myself in danger of attempting to make it even more elegant than usual, and thereby of spoiling it, under the influence of your commendations. But my old helter-skelter manner has already succeeded so well, that I will not, even for the sake of entitling myself to a still greater portion of your praise, abandon it.

I did not call in question Johnson's true spirit of poetry, because he was not qualified to relish blank verse (though, to tell you the truth, I think

* Sir Thomas More, a Tragedy.

that but an ugly symptom;) but if I did not express it I meant however to infer it from the perverse judgment that he has formed of our poets in general; depreciating some of the best, and making honourable mention of others, in my opinion not undeservedly neglected. I will lay you sixpence that, had he lived in the days of Milton, and by any accident had met with his Paradise Lost, he would neither have directed the attention of others to it, nor have much admired it himself. Good sense, in short, and strength of intellect, seem to me, rather than a fine taste, to have been his distinguished characteristics. But should you still think otherwise, you have my free permission; for so long as you yourself have a taste for the beauties of Cowper, I care not a fig whether Johnson had a taste or not.

I wonder where you find all your quotations, pat as they are to the present condition of France. Do you make them yourself, or do you actually find them? I am apt to suspect sometimes, that you impose them only on a poor man who has but twenty books in the world, and two of them are your brother Chester's. They are however much to the purpose, be the author of them who he may.

I was very sorry to learn lately that my friend at Chicheley has been sometimes indisposed, either with gout or rheumatism, (for it seems to be uncertain which) and attended by Dr. Kerr. I am at a loss to conceive how so temperate a man should acquire the gout, and am resolved therefore to conclude that it must be the rheumatism, which, bad as it is, is in my judgment the best of the two; and will afford me besides some opportunity to sympathize with him, for I am not perfectly exempt from it myself. Distant as you are in situation, you are yet perhaps nearer to him in point of intelligence than I; and if you can send me any particular news of him, pray do it in your next.

I love and thank you for your benediction. If God forgive me my sins, surely I shall love him much, for I have much to be forgiven. But the quantum need not discourage me, since there is One whose atonement can suffice for all.

Τα δε καθ' αιμα ρεων, και σοι, και εμοι και αδελφοις Ημετερσις, αυτα σωζομενοις θανατω.

Accept our joint remembrances, and believe me affectionately yours, W. C.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

Weston, March 19, 1791.

MY DEAREST JOHNNY,

You ask if it may not be improper to solicit Lady Hesketh's subscription to the poems of the Norwich maiden? To which I reply, it will be by no means improper. On the contrary, I am persuaded that she will give her name with a very good will, for she is much an admirer of poesy that is worthy to be admired, and such I think, judging by the specimen, the poesy of this maiden, Elizabeth Bentley of Norwich, is likely to prove.

Not that I am myself inclined to expect in general great matters, in the poetical way, from persons whose ill fortune it has been to want the common advantages of education; neither do I account it in general a kindness to such, to encourage them in the indulgence of a propensity more likely to do them harm in the end, than to advance their interest. Many such phenomena have arisen within my remembrance, at which all the world has wondered for a season, and has then forgot them.

The fact is, that though strong natural genius is always accompanied with strong natural tendency to its object, yet it often happens that the tendency is found where the genius is wanting. In the present instance, however (the poems of a certain Mrs. Leapor excepted, who published some forty years ago) I discern, I think, more marks of a true poetical talent than I remember to have observed in the verses of any other, male or female, so disadvantageously circumstanced. I wish her therefore good speed, and subscribe to her with all my heart.

You will rejoice when I tell you that I have some hopes, after all, of a harvest from Oxford also; Mr. Throckmorton has written to a person of considerable influence there, which he has desired him to exert in my favour; and *his* request, I should imagine, will hardly prove a vain one.

Adieu. W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Weston, March.* 24, 1791.

You apologize for your silence in a manner which affords me so much pleasure, that I can not but be satisfied. Let business be the cause, and I am contented. That is a cause to which I would even be accessary myself, and would increase yours by any means, except by a lawsuit of my own, at the expense of all your opportunities of writing oftener than thrice in a twelvemonth.

Your application to Dr. Dunbar reminds me of two lines to be found somewhere in Dr. Young:

"And now a poet's gratitude you see:
"Grant him two favours, and he'll ask for three.'

In this particular therefore I perceive that a poet,

and a poet's friend, bear a striking resemblance to each other. The Doctor will bless himself that the number of Scotch universities is not larger, assured that if they equalled those in England, in number of colleges, you would give him no rest till he had engaged them all. It is true, as Lady Hesketh told you, that I shall not fear in the matter of subscription a comparison even with Pope himself; considering (I mean) that we live in days of terrible taxation, and when verse, not being a necessary of life, is accounted dear, be it what it may, even at the lowest price. I am no very good arithmetician, yet I calculated the other day in my morning walk, that my two volumes, at the price of three guineas, will cost the purchaser less than the seventh part of a farthing per line. Yet there are lines among them, that have cost me the labour of hours, and none that have not cost me some labour. W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Friday night, March 25, 1791.

MY DEAREST COZ,

Johnson writes me word that he has repeatedly called on Horace Walpole, and has never found him at home. He has also written to him, and received no answer. I charge thee therefore on thy allegiance, that thou move not a finger more in this business. My back is up, and I can not bear the thought of wooing him any further, nor would do it, though he were as *pig* a gentleman (look you!) as Lucifer himself. I have Welch blood in me, if the pedigree of the Donnes say true, and every drop of it says—"Let him alone!"

I should have dined at the Hall to-day, having engaged myself to do so; but an untoward occurrence, that happened last night, or rather this morning, prevented me. It was a thundering rap at the door, just after the clock struck three. First, I thought the house was on fire. Then I thought the Hall was on fire. Then I thought it was a house-breaker's trick. Then I thought it was an express. In any case I thought that if it should be repeated, it would awaken and terrify Mrs. Unwin, and kill her with spasms. The consequence of all these thoughts was the worst nervous fever I ever had in my life, although it was the shortest. The rap was given but once, though a multifarious one. Had I heard a second, I should have risen myself at all adventures. It was the only minute since you went, in which I have been glad that you were not here. Soon after I came down, I learned that a drunken party had passed through the village at that time, and they were no doubt the authors of this witty, but troublesome invention.

Our thanks are due to you for the book you sent us. Mrs. Unwin has read me several parts of it, which I have much admired. The observations are shrewd and pointed; and there is much wit in the similes and illustrations. Yet a remark struck me, which I could not help making *vivâ voce* on the occasion. If the book has any real value, and does in truth deserve the notice taken of it by those to whom it is addressed, its claim is founded neither on the expression, nor on the style, nor on the wit of it, but altogether on the truth that it contains. Now the same truths are delivered, to my knowledge, perpetually from the pulpit by ministers, whom the admirers of this writer would disdain to hear. Yet the truth is not the less important for not being accompanied and recommended by brilliant thoughts and expressions; neither is God, from whom comes all truth, any more a respecter of wit than he is of persons. It will appear soon whether they applaud the book for the sake of its unanswerable arguments, or only tolerate the argument for the sake of the splendid manner in which it is enforced. I wish as heartily that it may do them good, as if I were myself the author of it. But alas! my wishes and hopes are much at variance. It will be the talk of the day, as another publication of the same kind has been; and then the noise of Vanity-fair will drown the voice of the preacher.

I am glad to learn that the Chancellor does not forget me, though more for his sake than my own; for I see not how he can ever serve a man like me. Adieu, my dearest Coz, W. C.

TO MRS. THROCKMORTON.

MY DEAR MRS. FROG, *April* 1, 1791.

A word or two before breakfast; which is all that I shall have time to send.—You have not, I hope, forgot to tell Mrs. Frog, how much I am obliged to him for his kind, though unsuccessful attempt in my favour at Oxford. It seems not a little extraordinary, that persons so nobly patronized themselves, on the score of literature, should resolve to give no encouragement to it in return. Should I find a fair opportunity to thank them hereafter, I will not neglect it.

> Could Homer come himself, distress'd and poor,
> And tune his harp at Rhedicina's door,
> The rich old vixen would exclaim (I fear
> "Begone! no tramper gets a farthing here."

I have read your husband's pamphlet through and through. You may think perhaps, and so may he, that a question so remote from all concern of mine could not interest me; but if you think so, you are both mistaken. He can write nothing

that will not interest me; in the first place, for the writer's sake; and in the next place because he writes better and reasons better than any body, with more candour, and more sufficiency; and consequently with more satisfaction to all his readers, save only his opponents. They, I think, by this time, wish that they had let him alone.

Tom is delighted past measure with his wooden nag, and gallops at a rate that would kill any horse that had a life to lose. Adieu, W. C.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

MY DEAR JOHNNY, *Weston, April* 6, 1791.

A THOUSAND thanks for your splendid assemblage of Cambridge luminaries! If you are not contented with your collection it can only be because you are unreasonable; for I who may be supposed more covetous on this occasion than any body, am highly satisfied, and even delighted with it. If indeed you should find it practicable to add still to the number, I have not the least objection. But this charge I give you:

Αλλο δε τοι ερεω συ δ ενι φρεσι βαλλεο σηπι.

Stay not an hour beyond the time you have mentioned, even though you should be able to add a thousand names by so doing! For I can not afford to purchase them at that cost. I long to see you, and so do we both, and will not suffer you to postpone your visit for any such consideration. No, my dear boy! in the affair of subscriptions we are already illustrious enough; shall be so at least, when you shall have enlisted a college or two more, which perhaps you may be enabled to do in the course of the ensuing week. I feel myself much obliged to your university, and much disposed to admire the liberality of spirit they have shown on this occasion. Certainly I had not deserved much favour of their hands, all things considered. But the cause of literature seems to have some weight with them, and to have superseded the resentment they might be supposed to entertain on the score of certain censures, that you wot of. It is not so at Oxford. W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *April* 29, 1791.

I FORGOT if I told you that Mr. Throckmorton had applied through the medium of ———— to the university of Oxford. He did so, but without success. Their answer was, "that they subscribe to nothing."

Pope's subscriptions did not amount, I think, to six hundred; and mine will not fall very far short of five. Noble doings, at a time of day when Homer has no news to tell us; and when, all other comforts of life having risen in price, poetry has of course fallen. I call it a "comfort of life;" it is so to others, but to myself it has become even a necessary.

These holiday times are very unfavourable to the printer's progress. He and all his demons are making themselves merry, and me sad, for I mourn at every hindrance. W. C.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Weston, May* 2, 1791.

MONDAY being a day in which Homer has now no demands on me, I shall give part of the present Monday to you. But it this moment occurs to me that the proposition with which I begin will be obscure to you, unless followed by an explanation. You are to understand therefore that Monday being no postday, I have consequently no proof-sheets to correct, the correction of which is nearly all that I have to do with Homer at present: I say nearly all, because I am likewise occasionally employed in reading over the whole of what is already printed, that I may make a table of errata to each of the poems. How much is already printed say you?—I answer—the whole Iliad, and almost seventeen books of the Odyssey.

About a fortnight since, perhaps three weeks, I had a visit from your nephew, Mr. Bagot, and his tutor, Mr. Hurlock, who came hither under conduct of your niece, Miss Barbara. So were the friends of Ulysses conducted to the palace of Antiphates, the Læstrigonian, by that monarch's daughter. But mine is no palace, neither am I a giant, neither did I devour any one of the party—on the contrary, I gave them chocolate, and permitted them to depart in peace. I was much pleased both with the young man and his tutor. In the countenance of the former I saw much Bagotism, and not less in manners. I will leave you to guess what I mean by that expression. Physiognomy is a study of which I have almost as high an opinion as Lavater himself, the professor of it, and for this good reason, because it never yet deceived me. But perhaps I shall speak more truly if I say that I am somewhat of an adept in the art, although I have *never studied* it; for whether I will or not, I judge of every human creature by the countenance, and, as I say, have never yet seen reason to repent of my judgment. Sometimes I feel myself powerfully attracted, as I was by your nephew, and sometimes with equal vehemence repulsed, which attraction and repulsion have always been justified in the sequel.

I have lately read, and with more attention than I ever gave them before, Milton's Latin poems. But these I must make the subject of some future

letter, in which it will be ten to one that your friend Samuel Johnson gets another slap or two at the hands of your humble servant. Pray read them yourself, and with as much attention as I did; then read the Doctor's remarks if you have them, and then tell me what you think of both. It will be pretty sport for you on such a day as this, which is the fourth that we have had of almost incessant rain. The weather, and a cold, the effect of it, have confined me ever since last Thursday. Mrs. Unwin however is well, and joins me in every good wish to you and your family. I am, my good friend, Most truly yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. MR. BUCHANAN.

MY DEAR SIR, *Weston, May* 11, 1791.

You have sent me a beautiful poem, wanting nothing but metre. I would to Heaven that you would give it that requisite yourself; for he who could make the sketch, can not but be well qualified to finish. But if you will not, I will; provided always nevertheless, that God gives me ability, for it will require no common share to do justice to your conceptions.

I am much yours, W. C.

Your little messenger vanished before I could catch him.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, May 18, 1791.

MY DEAREST COZ,

Has another of my letters fallen short of its destination; or wherefore is it, that thou writest not? One letter in five weeks is a poor allowance for your friends at Weston. One that I received two or three days since from Mrs. Frog, has not at all enlightened me on this head. But I wander in a wilderness of vain conjecture.

I have had a letter lately from New York, from a Dr. Cogswell of that place to thank me for my fine verses, and to tell me, which pleased me particularly, that after having read the Task, my first volume fell into his hands, which he read also, and was equally pleased with. This is the only instance I can recollect of a reader, who has done justice to my first effusions: for I am sure, that in point of expression they do not fall a jot below my second, and that in point of subject they are for the most part superior. But enough, and too much of this The Task, he tells me, has been reprinted in that city.

Adieu! my dearest coz.

We have blooming scenes under wintry skies, and with icy blasts to fan them.

Ever thine, W. C.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

Weston, May 23, 1791.

MY DEAREST JOHNNY,

Did I not know that you are never more in your element, than when you are exerting yourself in my cause, I should congratulate you on the hope there seems to be that your labour will soon have an end.

You will wonder perhaps, my Johnny, that Mrs. Unwin, by my desire, enjoined you to secrecy concerning the translation of the Frogs and Mice. Wonderful it may well seem to you that I should wish to hide for a short time from a few, what I am just going to publish to all. But I had more reasons than one for this mysterious management; that is to say, I had two. In the first place, I wished to surprise my readers agreeably; and secondly, I wished to allow none of my friends an opportunity to object to the measure, who might think it perhaps a measure more bountiful than prudent. But I have had my sufficient reward, though not a pecuniary one. It is a poem of much humour, and accordingly I found the translation of it very amusing. It struck me too, that I must either make it part of the present publication, or never publish it at all; it would have been so terribly out of its place in any other volume.

I long for the time that shall bring you once more to Weston, and all your *et ceteras* with you. O! what a month of May has this been! Let never poet, English poet at least, give himself to the praises of May again. W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

MY DEAREST COZ, *The Lodge, May* 27, 1791.

I, who am neither dead, nor sick, nor idle should have no excuse, were I as tardy in answering, as you in writing. I live indeed where leisure abounds; and you, where leisure is not: a difference that accounts sufficiently both for your silence and my loquacity.

When you told Mrs. ———, that my Homer would come forth in May, you told her what you believed, and therefore no falsehood. But you told her at the same time what will not happen, and therefore not a truth. There is a medium between truth and falsehood; and (I believe) the word mistake expresses it exactly. I will therefore say that you were mistaken. If instead of May you had mentioned June, I flatter myself that you would have hit the mark. For in June there is every probability that we shall publish. You will say, "hang the printer!—for it is his fault!" But stay, my dear, hang him not just now! For to execute him, and find another, will cost us time,

and so much too, that I question if, in that case, we should publish sooner than in August. To say truth, I am not perfectly sure that there will be any necessity to hang him at all! though that is a matter which I desire to leave entirely at your discretion, alleging only in the mean time, that the man does not appear to me during the last half-year to have been at all in fault. His remittance of sheets in all that time has been punctual, save and except while the Easter holidays lasted, when (I suppose) he found it impossible to keep his devils to their business. I shall however receive the last sheet of the Odyssey to-morrow, and have already sent up the Preface, together with all the needful. You see therefore that the publication of this famous work can not be delayed much longer.

As for politics, I reck not, having no room in my head for any thing but the Slave-bill. That is lost; and all the rest is a trifle. I have not seen Paine's book, but refused to see it when it was offered to me. No man shall convince me that I am improperly governed, while I feel the contrary.

Adieu! W. C.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

Weston, June 1, 1791.

MY DEAREST JOHNNY,

Now you may rest—Now I can give you joy of the period, of which I gave you hope in my last; the period of all your labours in my service. —But this I can foretell you also, that if you persevere in serving your friends at this rate, your life is likely to be a life of labour:—yet persevere! your rest will be the sweeter hereafter! In the mean time I wish you, if at any time you should find occasion for him, just such a friend as you have proved to me! W. C.

TO THE REV. MR. HURDIS.

MY DEAR SIR, *Weston, June* 13, 1791.

I OUGHT to have thanked you for your agreeable and entertaining letter much sooner, but I have many correspondents, who will not be said, nay; and have been obliged of late to give my last attentions to Homer. The very last indeed; for yesterday I despatched to town, after revising them carefully, the proof sheets of subscribers' names, among which I took special notice of yours, and am much obliged to you for it. We have contrived, or rather my bookseller and printer have contrived (for they have never waited a moment for me,) to publish as critically at the wrong time, as if my whole interest and success had depended upon it. March, April, and May, said Johnson to me in a letter that I received from him in February, are the best months for publication. *Therefore* now it is determined that Homer shall come out on the first of July; that is to say, exactly at the moment when, except a few lawyers, not a creature will be left in town who will ever care one farthing about him. To which of these two friends of mine I am indebted for this management, I know not. It does not please; but I would be a philosopher as well as a poet, and therefore make no complaint, or grumble at all about it. You, I presume, have had dealings with them both—how did they manage for you? And if as they have for me, how did you behave under it? Some who love me complain that I am too passive; and I should be glad of an opportunity to justify myself by your example. The fact is, should I thunder ever so loud, no efforts of that sort will avail me now; therefore like a good economist of my bolts, I choose to reserve them for more profitable occasions.

I am glad to find that your amusements have been so similar to mine; for in this instance too I seemed to have need of somebody to keep me in countenance, especially in my attention and attachment to animals. All the notice that we lords of the creation vouchsafe to bestow on the creatures, is generally to abuse them; it is well therefore that here and there a man should be found a little womanish, or perhaps a little childish in this matter, who will make some amends, by kissing, and coaxing, and laying them in one's bosom. You remember the little ewe lamb, mentioned by the prophet Nathan; the prophet perhaps invented the tale for the sake of its application to David's conscience; but it is more probable that God inspired him with it for that purpose. If he did, it amounts to a proof that he does not overlook, but on the contrary much notices such little partialities and kindness to his *dumb* creatures, as we, because we articulate, are pleased to call them.

Your sisters are fitter to judge than I, whether assembly rooms are the places of all others, in which the ladies may be studied to most advantage. I am an old fellow, but I had once my dancing days, as you have now; yet I could never find I learned half so much of a woman's real character by dancing with her, as by conversing with her at home, where I could observe her behaviour at the table, at the fireside, and in all the trying circumstances of domestic life. We are all good when we are pleased; but she is the good woman, who wants not a fiddle to sweeten her. If I am wrong, the young ladies will set me right; in the mean time I will not tease you with graver arguments on the subject, especially as I have a hope that years, and the study of the Scripture, and His Spirit, whose word it is, will, in due time, bring you to my way of thinking. I am not one

of those sages, who require that young men should be as old as themselves before they have time to be so.

With my love to your fair sisters, I remain,
Dear sir, most truly yours, W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

The Lodge, June 15, 1791.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

If it will afford you any comfort that you have a share in my affections, of that comfort you may avail yourself at all times. You have acquired it by means which, unless I should become worthless myself, to an uncommon degree, will always secure you from the loss of it. You are learning what all learn, though few at so early an age, that man is an ungrateful animal; and that benefits too often, instead of securing a due return, operate rather as provocations to ill treatment. This I take to be the *summum malum* of the human heart. Towards God we are all guilty of it more or less; but between man and man, we may thank God for it, there are some exceptions He leaves this peccant principle to operate in some degree against himself in all, for our humiliation I suppose; and because the pernicious effects of it in reality can not injure him, he can not suffer by them; but he knows that unless he should restrain its influence on the dealings of mankind with each other, the bonds of society would be dissolved, and all charitable intercourse at an end amongst us. It was said of Archbishop Cranmer, "Do him an ill turn, and you make him your *friend* for ever;" of others it may be said, "Do them a good one, and they will be for ever your *enemies*." It is the Grace of God only that makes the difference.

The absence of Homer (for we have now shaken hands and parted) is well supplied by three relations of mine from Norfolk. My cousin Johnson, an aunt of his, and his sister. I love them all dearly, and am well contented to resign to them the place in my attentions so lately occupied by the chiefs of Greece and Troy. His aunt and I have spent many a merry day together, when we were some forty years younger; and we make shift to be merry together still. His sister is a sweet young woman, graceful, good-natured, and gentle, just what I had imagined her to be before I had seen her. Farewell. W. C.

TO DR. JAMES COGSWELL,

NEW YORK.

Weston Underwood, near Olney, Bucks,
DEAR SIR, *June* 15, 1791.

Your letter and obliging present from so great a distance deserved a speedier acknowledgment, and should not have wanted one so long had not circumstances so fallen out since I received them as to make it impossible for me to write sooner. It is indeed but within this day or two that I have heard how, by the help of my bookseller, I may transmit an answer to you.

My title page, as it well might, misled you. It speaks me of the Inner Temple, and so I am, but a member of that society only, not as an inhabitant. I live here almost at the distance of sixty miles from London, which I have not visited these eight and twenty years, and probably never shall again. Thus it fell out that Mr. Morewood had sailed again for America before your parcel reached me, nor should I (it is likely) have received it at all, had not a cousin of mine, who lives in the Temple, by good fortune, received it first, and opened your letter; finding for whom it was intended, he transmitted to me both that and the parcel. Your testimony of approbation of what I have published, coming from another quarter of the globe, could not but be extremely flattering, as was your obliging notice, that the Task had been reprinted in your city. Both volumes, I hope, have a tendency to discountenance vice, and promote the best interests of mankind. But how far they shall be effectual to these invaluable purposes, depends altogether on his blessing, whose truths I have endeavoured to inculcate. In the mean time I have sufficient proof that readers may be pleased, may approve, and yet lay down the book unedified.

During the last five years I have been occupied with a work of a very different nature, a translation of the Iliad and Odyssey into blank verse, and the work is now ready for publication. I undertook it partly because Pope's is too lax a version, which has lately occasioned the learned of this country to call aloud for a new one, and partly because I could fall on no better expedient to amuse a mind too much addicted to melancholy.

I send you in return for the volumes with which you favoured me, three on religious subjects, popular productions that have not been long published, and that may not therefore yet have reached your country; The Christian Officer's Panoply, by a marine officer—The Importance of the Manners of the Great, and an Estimate of the Religion of the Fashionable World. The two last are said to be written by a lady, Miss Hannah More, and are universally read by people of that rank to which she addresses them. Your manners I suppose may be more pure than ours, yet it is not unlikely that even among you may be found some to whom her strictures are applicable. I return you my thanks, sir, for the volumes you sent me, two of which I have read with pleasure, Mr. Edwards' book, and the Conquest of Canaan. The rest I have not had time to read, except Dr. Dwight's Sermon,

which pleased me almost more than any that I have either seen or heard.

I shall account a correspondence with you an honour, and shall remain, dear sir,

Your obliged and obedient servant, W. C.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Weston, Aug.* 2, 1791.

I was much obliged, and still feel myself much obliged to Lady Bagot, for the visit with which she favoured me. Had it been possible that I could have seen Lord Bagot too, I should have been completely happy. For, as it happened, I was that morning in better spirits than usual; and though I arrived late, and after a long walk, and extremely hot, which is a circumstance very apt to disconcert me, yet I was not disconcerted half so much as I generally am at the sight of a stranger, especially of a stranger lady, and more especially at the sight of a stranger lady of quality. When the servant told me that lady Bagot was in the parlour, I felt my spirits sink ten degrees; but the moment I saw her, at least when I had been a minute in her company, I felt them rise again, and they soon rose above their former pitch. I know two ladies of fashion now, whose manners have this effect upon me. The lady in question, and the lady Spencer. I am a shy animal, and want much kindness to make me easy. Such I shall be to my dying day.

Here sit *I*, calling myself *shy*, yet have just published by the *by*, two great volumes of poe*try*.

This reminds me of Ranger's observation in the Suspicious Husband, who says to somebody, I forget whom—"*There is a degree of assurance in you modest men, that we impudent fellows can never arrive at!*"—Assurance indeed! Have you seen 'em? What do you think they are? Nothing less I can tell you than a translation of Homer. Of the sublimest poet in the world. That's all. Can I ever have the impudence to call myself shy again?

You live, I think, in the neighbourhood of Birmingham? What must you not have felt on the late alarming occasion! You I suppose could see the fires from your windows. We, who only heard the news of them have trembled. Never sure was religious zeal more terribly manifested, or more to the prejudice of its own cause.

Adieu, my dear friend. I am, with Mrs. Unwin's best compliments, Ever yours, W C.

TO THE REV. MR. HURDIS.

MY DEAR SIR, *Weston, Aug.* 9, 1791.

I never make a correspondent wait for an answer through idleness or want of proper respect for him; but if I am silent it is because I am busy, or not well, or because I stay till something occur, that may make my letter at least a little better than mere blank paper. I therefore write speedily in reply to yours, being at present neither much occupied, nor at all indisposed, nor forbidden by a dearth of materials.

I wish always when I have a new piece in hand to be as secret as you, and there was a time when I could be so. Then I lived the life of a solitary, was not visited by a single neighbour, because I had none with whom I could associate; nor ever had an inmate. This was when I dwelt at Olney; but since I have removed to Weston the case is different. Here I am visited by all around me, and study in a room exposed to all manner of inroads. It is on the ground floor, the room in which we dine, and in which I am sure to be found by all who seek me. They find me generally at my desk, and with my work, whatever it be, before me, unless perhaps I have conjured it into its hiding place before they have had time to enter. This however is not always the case, and consequently, sooner or later, I can not fail to be detected. Possibly you, who I suppose have a snug study, would find it impracticable to attend to any thing closely in an apartment exposed as mine; but use has made it familiar to me, and so familiar, that neither servants going and coming disconcert me; nor even if a lady, with an oblique glance of her eye, catches two or three lines of my MS., do I feel myself inclined to blush, though naturally the shyest of mankind.

You did well, I believe, to cashier the subject of which you gave me a recital. It certainly wants those *agremens*, which are necessary to the success of any subject in verse. It is a curious story, and so far as the poor young lady was concerned a very affecting one; but there is a coarseness in the character of the hero, that would have spoiled all. In fact, I find it myself a much easier matter to write, than to get a convenient theme to write on.

I am obliged to you for comparing me as you go both with Pope and with Homer. It is impossible in any other way of management to know whether the Translation be well executed or not, and if well, in what degree. It was in the course of such a process, that I first became dissatisfied with Pope. More than thirty years since, and when I was a young Templar, I accompanied him with his original, line by line, through both poems. A fellow student of mine, a person of fine classic taste, joined himself with me in the labour. We were neither of us, as you may imagine, very diligent in our proper business.

I shall be glad if my Reviewers, whosoever they may be, will be at the pains to read me as you do. I want no praise that I am not entitled to; but of that to which I am entitled I should be loth to lose a tittle, having worked hard to earn it.

I would heartily second the bishop of Salisbury in recommending to you a close pursuit of your Hebrew studies, were it not that I wish you to publish what I may understand. Do both, and I shall be satisfied.

Your remarks, if I may but receive them soon enough to serve me in case of a new edition, will be extremely welcome. W. C.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

MY DEAREST JOHNNY, *Weston, Aug.* 9, 1791.

The little that I have heard about Homer myself has been equally, or more flattering than Dr. ———'s intelligence, so that I have good reason to hope that I have not studied the old Grecian, and how to dress him, so long, and so intensely, to no purpose. At present I am idle, both on account of my eyes, and because I know not to what to attach myself in particular. Many different plans and projects are recommended to me. Some call aloud for original verse, others for more translation, and others for other things. Providence, I hope, will direct me in my choice; for other guide I have none, nor wish for another.

God bless you, my dearest Johnny. W. C.*

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *The Lodge, Sept.* 14, 1791.

Whoever reviews me will in fact have a laborious task of it, in the performance of which he ought to move leisurely, and to exercise much critical discernment. In the mean time my courage is kept up by the arrival of such testimonies in my favour, as give me the greatest pleasure; coming from quarters the most respectable. I have reason therefore to hope that our periodical judges will not be very adverse to me, and that perhaps they may even favour me. If one man of taste and letters is pleased, another man so qualified can hardly be displeased; and if critics of a different description grumble, they will not however materially hurt me.

You, who know how necessary it is to me to be employed, will be glad to hear that I have been called to a new literary engagement, and that I have not refused it. A Milton that is to rival, and if possible to exceed in splendour Boydell's Shakspeare, is in contemplation, and I am in the editor's office. Fuseli is the painter. My business will be to select notes from others, and to write original notes; to translate the Latin and Italian poems, and to give a correct text. I shall have years allowed me to do it in. W. C.

* The translation alluded to in this letter was that of the Latin and Italian poetry of Milton, which Cowper was requested by his bookseller to undertake.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Weston, Sept.* 21, 1791.

Of all the testimonies in favour of my Homer that I have received, none has given me so sincere a pleasure as that of Lord Bagot. It is an unmixed pleasure and without a drawback: because I know him to be perfectly, and in all respects, whether erudition, or a fine taste be in question, so well qualified to judge me, that I can neither expect nor wish a sentence more valuable than his—

. . . . . εισοκ' αυτμη
'Εν στηθεσσι μενει, και μοι φιλα γυνατ' ορωρει.

I hope by this time you have received your volumes, and are prepared to second the applauses of your brother—else, wo be to you! I wrote to Johnson immediately on the receipt of your last, giving him a strict injunction to despatch them to you without delay. He had sold some time since a hundred of the unsubscribed-for copies.

I have not a history in the world except Baker's Chronicle, and that I borrowed three years ago from Mr. Throckmorton. Now the case is this; I am translating Milton's third Elegy—his Elegy on the death of the Bishop of Winchester. He begins it with saying that while he was sitting alone, dejected, and musing on many melancholy themes; first, the idea of the plague presented itself to his mind, and of the havoc made by it among the great.—Then he proceeds thus;

Tum memini clarique ducis, fratrisque verendi
Intempestivis ossa cremata rogis:
Et memini Heroum, quos vidit ad æthera raptos.
Flevit et amissos Belgia tota duces.

I can not learn from my only oracle, Baker, who this famous leader and his reverend brother were. Neither does he at all ascertain for me the event alluded to in the second of these couplets. I am not yet possessed of Warton, who probably explains it, nor can be for a month to come. Consult him for me if you have him, or if you have him not consult some other. Or you may find the intelligence perhaps in your own budget; no matter how you come by it, only send it to me if you can, and as soon as you can, for I hate to leave unsolved difficulties behind me. In the first year of Charles the First, Milton was seventeen years of age, and then wrote this Elegy. The period therefore to which I would refer you, is the two or three last years of James the First.

Ever yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Weston, Oct.* 25, 1791.

Your unexpected and transient visit, like every thing else that is past, has now the appearance of a dream; but it was a pleasant one, and I heartily wish that such dreams could recur more frequently. Your brother Chester repeated his visit yesterday, and I never saw him in better spirits. At such times he has, now and then, the very look that he had when he was a boy; and when I see it, I seem to be a boy myself, and entirely forget for a short moment the years that have intervened since I was one. The look that I mean is one that you, I dare say, have observed.—Then we are at Westminster again. He left with me that poem of your brother Lord Bagot's, which was mentioned when you were here. It was a treat to me, and I read it to my cousin Lady Hesketh and to Mrs. Unwin, to whom it was a treat also. It has great sweetness of numbers, and much elegance of expression, and is just such a poem as I should be happy to have composed myself about a year ago, when I was loudly called upon by a certain nobleman, to celebrate the beauties of his villa. But I had two insurmountable difficulties to contend with. One was, that I had never seen his villa; and the other, that I had no eyes at that time for any thing but Homer. Should I at any time hereafter undertake the task, I shall now at least know how to go about it, which, till I had seen Lord Bagot's poem, I verily did not. I was particularly charmed with the parody of those beautiful lines of Milton.

> "The song was partial, but the harmony——
> (What could it less, when spirits immortal sing?)
> Suspended Hell, and took with ravishment
> The thronging audience."

There's a parenthesis for you! The parenthesis it seems is out of fashion, and perhaps the moderns are in the right to proscribe what they can not attain to. I will answer for it that, had we the art at this day of insinuating a sentiment in this graceful manner, no reader of taste would quarrel with the practice. Lord Bagot showed his by selecting the passage for his imitation.

I would beat Warton if he were living, for supposing that Milton ever repented of his compliment to the memory of Bishop Andrews. I neither do, nor can, nor will believe it. Milton's mind could not be narrowed by any thing; and though he quarrelled with episcopacy in the church of England idea of it, I am persuaded that a good bishop, as well as any other good man, of whatsoever rank or order, had always a share of his veneration. Yours, my dear friend,

Very affectionately, W. C.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

MY DEAR JOHNNY, *Weston, Oct.* 31, 1791.

Your kind and affectionate letter well deserves my thanks, and should have had them long ago, had I not been obliged lately to give my attention to a mountain of unanswered letters, which I have just now reduced to a molehill; yours lay at the bottom, and I have at last worked my way down to it.

It gives me great pleasure that you have found a house to your minds. May you all three be happier in it than the happiest that ever occupied it before you! But my chief delight of all is to learn that you and Kitty are so completely cured of your long and threatening maladies. I always thought highly of Dr. Kerr, but his extraordinary success in your two instances has even inspired me with an affection for him.

My eyes are much better than when I wrote last, though seldom perfectly well many days together. At this season of the year I catch perpetual colds, and shall continue to do so, till I have got the better of that tenderness of habit with which the summer never fails to affect me.

I am glad that you have heard well of my work in your country. Sufficient proofs have reached me from various quarters, that I have not ploughed the field of Troy in vain.

Were you here I would gratify you with an enumeration of particulars; but since you are not, it must content you to be told, that I have every reason to be satisfied.

Mrs. Unwin, I think, in her letter to cousin Balls, made mention of my new engagement. I have just entered on it, and therefore can at present say little about it.

It is a very creditable one in itself; and may I but acquit myself of it with sufficiency, it will do me honour. The commentator's part however is a new one to me, and one that I little thought to appear in.

Remember your promise, that I shall see you in the spring.

The Hall has been full of company ever since you went, and at present my Catharina is there singing and playing like an angel. W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Nov.* 14, 1791.

I have waited and wished for your opinion with the feelings that belong to the value I have for it, and am very happy to find it so favourable. In my table drawer I treasure up a bundle of suffrages, sent me by those of whose approbation I was

most ambitious, and shall presently insert yours among them.

I know not why we should quarrel with compound epithets; it is certain at least they are as agreeable to the genius of our language as to that of the Greek, which is sufficiently proved by their being admitted into our common and colloquial dialect. Black-eyed, nut-brown, crook-shanked, hump-backed, are all compound epithets, and, together with a thousand other such, are used continually, even by those who profess a dislike to such combinations in poetry. Why then do they treat with so much familiarity a thing that they say disgusts them? I doubt if they could give this question a reasonable answer; unless they should answer it by confessing themselves unreasonable.

I have made a considerable progress in the trans-'ation of Milton's Latin poems. I give them, as opportunity offers, all the variety of measure that I can. Some I render in heroic rhyme, some in stanzas, some in seven, and some in eight syllable measure, and some in blank verse. They will, altogether, I hope, make an agreeable miscellany for the English reader. They are certainly good in themselves, and can not fail to please, but by the fault of their translator. W. C.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

Weston-Underwood, Dec. 5, 1791.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Your last brought me two cordials; for what can better deserve that name than the cordial approbation of two such readers as your brother, the bishop, and your good friend and neighbour, the clergyman? The former I have ever esteemed and honoured with the justest cause, and am as ready to honour and esteem the latter as you can wish me to be, and as his virtues and talents deserve. Do I hate a parson? Heaven forbid! I love you all when you are good for any thing; and as to the rest, I would mend them if I could, and that is the worst of my intentions towards them.

I heard above a month since, that this first edition of my work was at that time nearly sold. It will not therefore, I presume, be long before I must go to press again. This I mention merely from an earnest desire to avail myself of all other strictures, that either your good neighbour, Lord Bagot, the bishop, or yourself,

πάντων εκπαγλοτατ' ανδρων,

may happen to have made, and will be so good as to favour me with. Those of the good Evander contained in your last have served me well, and I have already, in the three different places referred to, accommodated the text to them. And this I have done in one instance, even a little against the bias of my own opinion.

. . . . . εγω δε κεν αυτος 'ελωμαι
'Ελθων συν πλεονεσσι.

The sense I had given of these words is the sense in which an old scholiast has understood them, as appears in Clarke's note in loco. Clarke indeed prefers the other, but it does not appear plain to me that he does it with good reason against the judgment of a very ancient commentator, and a Grecian. And I am the rather inclined to this persuasion, because Achilles himself seems to have apprehended that Agamemnon would not content himself with Briseïs only, when he says,

But I have *other* precious things on board,
Of *these* take *none* away without my leave, &c.

It is certain that the words are ambiguous, and that the sense of them depends altogether on the punctuation. But I am always under the correction of so able a critic as your neighbour, and have altered, as I say, my version accordingly.

As to Milton, the die is cast. I am engaged, have bargained with Johnson, and can not recede. I should otherwise have been glad to do as you advise, to make the translation of his Latin and Italian, part of another volume; for, with such an addition, I have nearly as much verse in my budget as would be required for the purpose. This squabble, in the mean time, between Fuseli and Boydell, does not interest me at all; let it terminate as it may, I have only to perform my job, and leave the event to be decided by the combatants.

Suave mari magno turbantibus æquora ventis
E terra ingentem alterius spectare laborem.

Adieu, my dear friend, I am most sincerely yours, W. C.

Why should you suppose that I did not admire the poem you showed me? I did admire it, and told you so, but you carried it off in your pocket, and so doing, left me to forget it, and without the means of inquiry.

I am thus nimble in answering, merely with a view to ensure myself the receipt of other remarks in time for a new impression.

TO THE REV. MR. HURDIS.

DEAR SIR, *Weston, Dec.* 10, 1791.

I AM much obliged to you for wishing that I were employed in some original work rather than in translation. To tell you the truth, I am of your mind; and unless I could find another Homer, I shall promise (I believe) and vow, when I

have done with Milton, never to translate again. But my veneration for our great countryman is equal to what I feel for the Grecian; and consequently I am happy, and feel myself honourably employed whatever I do for Milton. I am now translating his *Epitaphium Damonis*, a pastoral in my judgment equal to any of Virgil's Bucolics, but of which Dr. Johnson (so it pleased him) speaks, as I remember, contemptuously. But he who never saw any beauty in a rural scene was not likely to have much taste for a pastoral. *In pace quiescat!*

I was charmed with your friendly offer to be my advocate with the public; should I want one, I know not where I could find a better. The reviewer in the Gentleman's Magazine grows more and more civil. Should he continue to sweeten at this rate, as he proceeds, I know not what will become of all the little modesty I have left. I have availed myself of some of his strictures, for I wish to learn from every body. W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *The Lodge, Dec.* 21, 1791.

It gives me, after having indulged a little hope that I might see you in the holidays, to be obliged to disappoint myself. The occasion too, is such as will ensure me your sympathy.

On Saturday last, while I was at my desk near the window, and Mrs. Unwin at the fire-side opposite to it, I heard her suddenly exclaim, "Oh! Mr. Cowper, don't let me fall!" I turned and saw her actually falling together with her chair, and started to her side just in time to prevent her. She was seized with a violent giddiness, which lasted, though with some abatement, the whole day, and was attended too with some other very, very alarming symptoms. At present however she is relieved from the vertigo, and seems in all respects better.

She has been my faithful and affectionate nurse for many years, and consequently has a claim on all my attentions. She has them, and will have them as long as she wants them; which will probably be, at the best a considerable time to come. I feel the shock, as you may suppose, in every nerve. God grant that there may be no repetition of it. Another such a stroke upon her would, I think, overset me completely; but at present I hold up bravely. W. C.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

Weston-Underwood, Feb. 14, 1792.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

It is the only advantage I believe that they who love each other derive from living at a distance, that the news of such ills as may happen to either seldom reaches the other, till the cause of complaint is over. Had I been next neighbour I should have suffered with you during the whole indisposition of your two children and your own. As it is, I have nothing to do but to rejoice in your own recovery and theirs, which I do sincerely, and wish only to learn from yourself that it is complete.

I thank you for suggesting the omission of the line due to the helmet of Achilles. How the omission happened I know not, whether by my fault or the printer's; it is certain however that I had translated it, and I have now given it its proper place.

I purpose to keep back a second edition, till I have had an opportunity to avail myself of the remarks both of friends and strangers. The ordeal of criticism still awaits me in the reviews, and probably they will all in their turn mark many things that may be mended. By the Gentleman's Magazine I have already profited in several instances. My reviewer there, though favourable in the main, is a pretty close observer, and though not always right, is often so.

In the affair of Milton I will have no *horrida bella*, if I can help it. It is at least my present purpose to avoid them if possible. For which reason, unless I should soon see occasion to alter my plan, I shall confine myself merely to the business of an annotator, which is my proper province, and shall sift out of Warton's notes every tittle that relates to the private character, political or religious principles of my author. These are properly subjects for a biographer's handling, but by no means, as it seems to me, for a commentator's.

In answer to your question if I have had a correspondence with the Chancellor—I reply—yes. We exchanged three or four letters on the subject of Homer, or rather on the subject of my Preface. He was doubtful whether or not my preference of blank verse, as affording opportunity for a closer version, was well founded. On this subject he wished to be convinced; defended rhyme with much learning, and much shrewd reasoning, but at last allowed me the honour of the victory, expressing himself in these words:—*I am clearly convinced that Homer may be best rendered in blank verse, and you have succeeded in the passages that I have looked into.*

Thus it is when a wise man differs in opinion. Such a man will be candid; and conviction, not triumph, will be his object.

Adieu!—The hard name I gave you I take to myself, and am your

ἐκταλιτατος,

W. C.

TO THE LORD THURLOW.

MY LORD,

A LETTER reached me yesterday from Henry Cowper, enclosing another from your Lordship to himself, of which a passage in my work formed the subject. It gave me the greatest pleasure; your strictures are perfectly just, and here follows the speech of Achilles accommodated to them * * * * * * *

I did not expect to find your Lordship on the side of rhyme, remembering well with how much energy and interest I have heard you repeat passages from the Paradise Lost, which you could not have recited as you did, unless you had been perfectly sensible of their music. It comforts me therefore to know that if you have an ear for rhyme you have an ear for blank verse also.

It seems to me that I may justly complain of rhyme as an inconvenience in translation, even though I assert in the sequel that to me it has been easier to rhyme than to write without, because I always suppose a rhyming translator to ramble, and always obliged to do so. Yet I allow your Lordship's version of this speech of Achilles to be very close, and closer much than mine. But I believe that should either your Lordship or I give them burnish or elevation, your lines would be found, in measure as they acquired stateliness, to have lost the merit of fidelity. In which case nothing more would be done than Pope has done already.

I can not ask your Lordship to proceed in your strictures, though I should be happy to receive more of them. Perhaps it is possible that when you retire into the country, you may now and then amuse yourself with my Translation. Should your remarks reach me, I promise faithfully that they shall be all most welcome, not only as yours, but because I am sure my work will be the better for them.

With sincere and fervent wishes for your Lordship's health and happiness,

I remain, my Lord, &c. W. C.*

* TO WILLIAM COWPER, ESQ.

From Lord Thurlow.

DEAR COWPER,

ON coming to town this morning, I was surprised, particularly at receiving from you an answer to a scrawl I sent Harry, which I have forgot too much to resume now. But I think I could not mean to patronise rhyme. I have fancied, that it was introduced to mark the measure in modern languages, because they are less numerous and metrical than the ancient; and the name seems to import as much. Perhaps there was melody in ancient song, without straining it to musical notes; as the common Greek pronunciation is said to have had the compass of five parts of an octave. But surely that word is only figuratively applied to modern poetry: euphony seems to be the highest term it will bear. I have fancied also, that euphony is an impression derived a good deal from habit, rather than suggested by nature: therefore in some degree accidental, and consequently conventional. Else why can't we bear a drama with rhyme; or the French one without it? Suppose the Rape of the Lock, Windsor Forest, L'Allegro, Il Penseroso, and many other little poems which please, stripped of the rhyme, which might easily be done, would they please as well? it would be unfair to treat rondeaus, ballads, and odes in the same manner, because rhyme makes in some sort a part of the conceit. It was this way of thinking, which made me suppose, that habitual prejudice would miss the rhyme: and that neither Dryden nor Pope would have dared to give their great authors in blank verse.

TO THE LORD THURLOW.

MY LORD,

WE are of one mind as to the agreeable effect of rhyme or euphony in the lighter kinds of poetry.

I wondered to hear you say you thought rhyme easier in original compositions; but you explained it, that you could go further a-field, if you were pushed for want of a rhyme. An expression preferred for the sake of the rhyme looks as if it were worth more than you allow. But to be sure in translation the necessity of rhyme imposes very heavy fetters upon those who mean translation, not paraphrase. Our common heroic metre is enough; the pure iambic, bearing only a sparing introduction of spondees, trochees, &c. to vary the measure.

Mere translation I take to be impossible, if no metre were required. But the difference of iambic and heroic measure destroys that at once. It is also impossible to obtain the same sense from a dead language, and an ancient author, which those of his own time and country conceived; words and phrases contract, from time and use, such strong shades of difference from their original import. In a living language, with the familiarity of a whole life, it is not easy to conceive truly the actual sense of current expressions; much less of older authors. No two languages furnish *equipollent* words; their phrases differ, their syntax and their idioms still more widely. But a translation strictly so called requires an exact conformity in all those particulars, and also in numbers: therefore it is impossible. I really think at present, notwithstanding the opinion expressed in your Preface, that a translator asks himself a good question. How would my author have expressed the sentence, I am turning, in English? for every idea conveyed in the original should be expressed in English, as literally, and fully, as the genius, and use, and character of the language will admit of.

In the passage before us ατται was the fondling expression of childhood to its parent; and to those who first translated the lines conveyed feelingly that amiable sentiment. Γεραι expressed the reverence which naturally accrues to age.

Διοτρεφης implies an history. Hospitality was an article of religion, strangers were supposed to

The pieces which your lordship mentions would certainly be spoiled by the loss of it, and so would all such. The Alma would lose all its neatness and smartness, and Hudibras all its humour. But in grave poems of extreme length I apprehend that the case is different. Long before I thought of commencing poet myself, I have complained and heard others complain of the wearisomeness of such poems. Not that I suppose that tædium the effect of rhyme itself, but rather of the perpetual recurrence of the same pause and cadence, unavoidable in the English couplet.

I hope I may say truly, it was not in a spirit of presumption that I undertook to do what, in your Lordship's opinion, neither Dryden nor Pope would have dared to do. On the contrary, I see not how I could have escaped that imputation, had I followed Pope in his own way. A closer translation was called for. I verily believe that rhyme had betrayed Pope into *his* deviations. For me therefore to have used his mode of versifying would have been to expose myself to the same miscarriage, at the same time that I had not his talents to atone for it.

I agree with your Lordship that a translation perfectly close is impossible, because time has sunk the original strict import of a thousand phrases, and we have no means of recovering it. But if we can not be unimpeachably faithful, that is no reason why we should not be as faithful as we can; and if blank verse affords the fairest chance, then it claims the preference.

Your lordship, I will venture to say, can command me nothing in which I will not obey with the greatest alacrity.

Ει δυναμαι τελεσαι γε και ει τετελεσμενον εστι.

But when, having made as close a translation as even you can invent, you enjoin me to make it still closer, and in rhyme too, I can only reply as Horace to Augustus,

———cupidum, pater optime, vires
Deficiunt———

I have not treacherously departed from my pattern that I might seem to give some proof of the justness of my own opinion, but have fairly and honestly adhered as closely to it as I could. Yet your lordship will not have to compliment me on my success, either in respect of the poetical merit of my lines, or of their fidelity. They have just enough of each to make them deficient in the other.

Oh Phœnix, father, friend, guest sent from Jove!
Me no such honours as they yield can move,
For I expect my honours from above.
Here Jove has fix'd me; and while breath and sense
Have place within me, I will never hence.
Hear too, and mark we well—Haunt not mine ears
With sighs, nor seek to melt me with thy tears
For yonder chief, lest urging such a plea
Through love of him, thou hateful prove to me.
Thy friendship for thy friend shall brighter shine
Wounding his spirit who has wounded mine.
Divide with me the honours of my throne—
These shall return, and make their tidings known;
But go not thou—thy couch shall here be dress'd
With softest fleeces for thy easy rest,
And with the earliest blush of op'ning day
We will consult to seek our home, or stay.

Since I wrote these I have looked at Pope's. I am certainly somewhat closer to the original than he, but further I say not.—I shall wait with impatience for your lordship's conclusions from these premises, and remain in the mean time with great truth, My Lord, &c. W. C.

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be sent by God, and honoured accordingly. Jove's altar was placed in ξενοδοχειον. Phœnix had been describing that as his situation in the court of Peleus: and his Διατρεφες refers to it.—But you must not translate that literally—

"Old daddy Phœnix, a God-send for us to maintain."

Precious limbs was at first an expression of great feeling; till vagabonds, draymen, &c. brought upon it the character of coarseness and ridicule.

It would run to great length, if I were to go through this one speech thus—this is enough for an example of my idea, and to prove the necessity of further deviation; which still is departing from the author, and justifiable only by strong necessity, such as should not be admitted, till the sense of the original had been laboured to the utmost, and been found irreducible.

I will end this by giving you the strictest translation I can invent, leaving you the double task of bringing it closer, and of polishing it into the tyle of poetry.

Ah! Phœnix, aged Father, guest of Jove!
I relish no such honours: for my hope
Is to be honour'd by Jove's fated will,
Which keeps me close beside these sable ships,
Long as the breath shall in my bosom stay,
Or as my precious knees retain their spring.
Further I say; and cast it in your mind!
Melt not my spirit down by weeping thus,
And wailing, only for that great man's sake,
Atrides: neither ought you love that man,
Lest I should hate the friend I love so well.
With me united 'tis your nobler part
To gall his spirit, who has galled mine.
With me reign equal, half my honours share.
These will report; stay you here, and repose
On a soft bed; and with the beaming morn
Consult we, whether to go home, or stay.

I have thought, that *hero* has contracted a different sense than it had in Homer's time, and is better rendered *great man:* but I am aware that the encliticks and other little words, falsely called expletives, are not introduced even so much as the genius of our language would admit. The euphony I leave entirely to you. Adieu!

TO THE LORD THURLOW.

MY LORD,

I haunt you with letters, but will trouble you now with a short line only to tell your lordship

how happy I am that any part of my work has pleased you.—I have a comfortable consciousness that the whole has been executed with equal industry and attention; and am, my Lord, with many thanks to you for snatching such a hasty moment to write to me,*

Your Lordship's obliged and affectionate humble servant,

WM. COWPER.

TO THE REV. MR. HURDIS.

MY DEAR SIR, *Weston, Feb.* 21, 1792.

My obligations to you on the score of your kind and friendly remarks demanded from me a much more expeditious acknowledgment of the numerous pacquets that contained them; but I have been hindered by many causes, each of which you would admit as a sufficient apology, but none of which I will mention, lest I should give too much of my paper to the subject. My acknowledgments are likewise due to your fair sister, who has transcribed so many sheets in so neat a hand, and with so much accuracy.

At present I have no leisure for Homer, but shall certainly find leisure to examine him with a reference to your strictures, before I send him a second time to the printer. This I am at present unwilling to do, choosing rather to wait, if that may be, till I shall have undergone the discipline of all the reviewers; none of whom yet have taken me in hand, the Gentleman's Magazine excepted. By several of his remarks I have benefited, and shall no doubt be benefited by the remarks of all.

Milton at present engrosses me altogether. His Latin pieces I have translated, and have begun with the Italian. These are few, and will not detain me long. I shall then proceed immediately to deliberate upon, and to settle the plan of my commentary, which I have hitherto had but little time to consider. I look forward to it, for this reason, with some anxiety. I trust at least that this anxiety will cease when I have once satisfied myself about the best manner of conducting it. But after all I seem to fear more the labour to which it calls me, than any great difficulty with which it is likely to be attended. To the labours of versifying I have no objection, but to the labours of criticism I am new, and apprehend that I shall find them wearisome. Should that be the case, I shall be dull, and must be contented to share the censure of being so, with almost all the commentators that have ever existed.

I have expected, but not wondered that I have not received Sir Thomas More and the other MSS. you promised me, because my silence has been such, considering how loudly I was called upon to write, that you must have concluded me either dead or dying, and did not choose perhaps to trust them to executors.

W. C.

* TO WILLIAM COWPER, ESQ.

From Lord Thurlow.

DEAR COWPER,

I have received your letter on my journey through London, and as the chaise waits I shall be short.

I did not mean it as a sign of any presumption that you have attempted what neither Dryden nor Pope would have dared; but merely as a proof of their addiction to rhyme; for I am clearly convinced that Homer may be better translated than into rhyme, and that you have succeeded in the places I have looked into. But I have fancied that it might have been still more literal, preserving the ease of genuine English and melody, and some degree of that elevation which Homer derives from simplicity. But I could not do it, or even near enough to form a judgment, or more than a fancy about it. Nor do I fancy it could be done "stans pede in uno." But when the mind has been fully impregnated with the original passage, often revolving it and waiting for a happy moment may still be neccssary to the best trained mind. Adieu.

TO THE REV. MR. HURDIS.

MY DEAR SIR, *Weston, March* 2, 1792.

I have this moment finished a comparison of your remarks with my text, and feel so sensibly my obligations to your great accuracy and kindness, that I can not deny myself the pleasure of expressing them immediately. I only wish that instead of revising the two first books of the Iliad, you could have found leisure to revise the whole two poems, sensible how much my work would have benefited.

I have not always adopted your lines, though often perhaps at least as good as my own; because there will and must be dissimilarity of manner between two so accustomed to the pen as we are. But I have let few passages go unamended, which you seemed to think exceptionable; and this not at all from complaisance; for in such a cause I would not sacrifice an iota on that principle, but on clear conviction.

I have as yet heard nothing from Johnson about the two MSS. you announce, but feel ashamed that I should want your letter to remind me of your obliging offer to inscribe Sir Thomas More to me, should you resolve to publish him Of my consent to such a measure you need not doubt. I am covetous of respect and honour from all such as you.

Tame hare, at present, I have none. But to make amends, I have a beautiful little spaniel, called Beau, to whom I will give the kiss your sister Sally intended for the former. Unless she should command me to bestow it elsewhere; it shall attend on her directions.

I am going to take a last dinner with a most agreeable family, who have been my only neighbours ever since I have lived at Weston. On Monday they go to London, and in the summer to an estate in Oxfordshire, which is to be their home in future. The occasion is not at all a pleasant one to me, nor does it leave me spirits to add more than that I am, dear sir,

Most truly yours, W. C.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

MY DEAREST JOHNNY, *Weston, March* 11, 1792.

You talk of primroses that you pulled on Candlemas day; but what think you of me who heard a nightingale on New Year's day? Perhaps I am the only man in England who can boast of such good fortune; good indeed, for if it was at all an omen, it could not be an unfavourable one. The winter, however, is now making himself amends, and seems the more peevish for having been encroached on at so undue a season. Nothing less than a large slice out of the spring will satisfy him.

Lady Hesketh left us yesterday. She intended indeed to have left us four days sooner; but in the evening before the day fixed for her departure, snow enough fell to occasion just so much delay of it.

We have faint hopes that in the month of May we shall see her again. I know that you have had a letter from her, and you will no doubt have the grace not to make her wait long for an answer.

We expect Mr. Rose on Tuesday; but he stays with us only till the Saturday following. With him I shall have some conferences on the subject of Homer, respecting a new edition I mean, and some perhaps on the subject of Milton; on him I have not yet begun to comment, or even fix the time when I shall.

Forget not your promised visit! W. C.

TO THE REV. MR. HURDIS.

MY DEAR SIR, *Weston, March* 23, 1792.

I have read your play carefully, and with great pleasure; it seems now to be a performance that can not fail to do you much credit. Yet, unless my memory deceives me, the scene between Cecilia and Heron in the garden has lost something that pleased me much when I saw it first; and I am not sure that you have not likewise obliterated an account of Sir Thomas's execution, that I found very pathetic. It would be strange if in these two particulars I should seem to miss what never existed; you will presently know whether I am as good at remembering what I never saw, as I am at forgetting what I have seen. But if I am right I can not help recommending the omitted passages to your reconsideration. If the play were designed for representation, I should be apt to think Cecilia's first speech rather too long, and should prefer to have it broken into dialogue, by an interposition now and then from one of her sisters. But since it is designed, as I understand, for the closet only, that objection seems of no importance; at no rate however would I expunge it; because it is both prettily imagined, and elegantly written.

I have read your *cursory remarks*, and am much pleased both with the style and the argument. Whether the latter be new or not, I am not competent to judge; if it be, you are entitled to much praise for the invention of it. Where other data are wanting to ascertain the time when an author of many pieces wrote each in particular, there can be no better criterion by which to determine the point, than the more or less proficiency manifested in the composition. Of this proficiency, where it appears, and of those plays in which it appears not, you seem to me to have judged well and truly; and consequently I approve of your arrangement.

I attended, as you desired me, in reading the character of Cecilia, to the hint you gave me concerning your sister Sally, and give you joy of such a sister. This however not exclusively of the rest, for though they may not be all Cecilias, I have a strong persuasion that they are all very amiable.

W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

MY DEAREST COZ, *The Lodge, March* 25, 1792.

Mr. Rose's longer stay than he at first intended was the occasion of the longer delay of my answer to your date, as you may both have perceived by the date thereof, and learned from his information. It was a daily trouble to me to see it lying in the window seat, while I knew you were in expectation of its arrival. By this time I presume you have seen him, and have seen likewise Mr. Hayley's friendly letter and complimentary sonnet, as well as the letter of the honest Quaker; all of which, at least the two former, I shall be glad to receive again at a fair opportunity. Mr. Hayley's letter slept six weeks in Johnson's custody. It was necessary I should answer it without delay, and accordingly I answered it the very evening on which I received it, giving him to understand, among other things, how much vexation the bookseller's folly had cost me, who had detained it so long; especially on account of the distress that I knew it must have occasioned to him also. From his reply, which the return of the post brought me, I learn that in the long interval of my noncorrespondence he had suffered anxiety and mortification

enough; so much that I dare say he made twenty vows never to hazard again either letter or compliment to an unknown author. What indeed could he imagine less, than that I meant by such an obstinate silence to tell him that I valued neither him nor his praises, nor his proffered friendship; in short that I considered him as a rival, and therefore, like a true author, hated and despised him? He is now however convinced that I love him, as indeed I do, and I account him the chief acquisition that my own verse has ever procured me. Brute should I be if I did not, for he promises me every assistance in his power.

I have likewise a very pleasing letter from Mr. Park, which I wish you were here to read; and a very pleasing poem that came enclosed in it for my revisal, written when he was only twenty years of age, yet wonderfully well written, though wanting some correction.

To Mr. Hurdis I return Sir Thomas More to-morrow; having revised it a second time. He is now a very respectable figure, and will do my friend, who gives him to the public this spring, considerable credit. W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *March* 30, 1792.

My mornings, ever since you went, have been given to my correspondents; this morning I have already written a long letter to Mr. Park, giving my opinion of his poem, which is a favourable one. I forget whether I showed it to you when you were here, and even whether I had then received it. He has genius and delicate taste; and if he were not an engraver might be one of our first hands in poetry. W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

Weston, April 5, 1792.

You talk, my dear friend, as John Bunyan says, like one that has the egg-shell still upon his head. You talk of the mighty favours that you have received from me, and forget entirely those for which I am indebted to you; but though you forget them, I shall not, nor ever think that I have requited you, so long as any opportunity presents itself of rendering you the smallest service; small indeed is all that I can ever hope to render.

You now perceive, and sensibly, that not without reason I complained as I used to do of those tiresome rogues the printers. Bless yourself that you have not two thick quartos to bring forth as I had. My vexation was always much increased by this reflection; they are every day, and all day long, employed in printing for somebody, and why not for me? This was adding mortification to disappointment, so that I often lost all patience.

The suffrage of Dr. Robertson makes more than amends for the scurvy jest passed upon me by the wag unknown. I regard him not; nor, except for about two moments after I first heard of his doings, have I ever regarded him. I have somewhere a secret enemy; I know not for what cause he should be so, but he I imagine supposes that he has a cause; it is well however to have but one; and I will take all the care I can not to increase the number.

I have begun my notes, and am playing the commentator manfully. The worst of it is that I am anticipated in almost all my opportunities to shine by those who have gone before me.

W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Weston, April* 6, 1792.

God grant that this friendship of ours may be a comfort to us all the rest of our days, in a world where true friendships are rarities, and especially where suddenly formed they are apt soon to terminate! But as I said before, I feel a disposition of heart toward you that I never felt for one whom I had never seen; and that shall prove itself I trust in the event a propitious omen.

* * * * * *

Horace says somewhere, though I may quote it amiss perhaps, for I have a terrible memory,

> Utrumque nostrum incredibili modo
> Consentit astrum.———

* * * * Our *stars consent*, at least have had an influence somewhat similar in another, and more important article.———* * *

It gives me the sincerest pleasure that I may hope to see you at Weston; for as to any migrations of mine, they must, I fear, notwithstanding the joy I should feel in being a guest of yours, be still considered in the light of impossibilities. Come then, my friend, and be as welcome, as the country people say here, as the flowers in May! I am happy, as I say, in the expectation, but the fear, or rather the consciousness that I shall not answer on a nearer view, makes it a trembling kind of happiness, and a doubtful.

After the privacy which I have mentioned above, I went to Huntingdon; soon after my arrival there, I took up my quarters at the house of the Rev. Mr. Unwin: I lived with him while he lived, and ever since his death have lived with his widow. Her, therefore, you will find mistress of the house; and I judge of you amiss, or you will find her just such as you would wish. To me she has been often a nurse, and invariably the

kindest friend, through a thousand adversities that I have had to grapple with in the course of almost thirty years. I thought it better to introduce her to you thus, than to present her to you at your coming quite a stranger.

Bring with you any books that you think may be useful to my commentatorship, for with you for an interpreter I shall be afraid of none of them. And in truth, if you think that you shall want them, you must bring books for your own use also, for they are an article with which I am *heinously unprovided;* being much in the condition of the man whose library Pope describes as

> No mighty store!
> His own works neatly bound, and little more!

You shall know how this has come to pass hereafter.

Tell me, my friend, are your letters in your own handwriting; if so, I am in pain for your eyes, lest by such frequent demands upon them I should hurt them. I had rather write you three letters, for one, much as I prize your letters, than *that* should happen. And now, for the present, adieu—I am going to accompany Milton into the lake of fire and brimstone, having just begun my annotations.

W. C.

TO THE REV. MR. HURDIS.

MY DEAR SIR, *Weston, April* 8, 1792.

Your entertaining and pleasant letter, resembling in that respect all that I receive from you, deserved a more expeditious answer; and should have had what it so well deserved, had it not reached me at a time when deeply in debt to all my correspondents, I had letters to write without number. Like autumnal leaves that strew the brooks in *Vallambrosa*, the unanswered farrago lay before me. If I quote at all, you must expect me henceforth to quote none but Milton, since for a long time to come I shall be occupied with him only.

I was much pleased with the extract you gave me from your sister Eliza's letter; she writes very elegantly, and (if I might say it without seeming to flatter you) I should say much in the manner of her brother. It is well for your sister Sally, that gloomy Dis is already a married man; else perhaps finding her, as he found Proserpine, studying botany in the fields, he might transport her to his own flowerless abode, where all her hopes of improvement in that science would be at an end for ever.

What letter of the tenth of December is that which you say you have not answered? Consider it is April now, and I never remember any thing that I write half so long. But perhaps it relates to Calchas, for I do remember that you have not yet furnished me with the secret history of him and his family, which I demanded from you.

Adieu. Yours, most sincerely, W. C.

I rejoice that you are so well with the learned Bishop of Sarum, and well remember how he ferreted the vermin Lauder out of all his hidings, when I was a boy at Westminster.

I have not yet studied with your last remarks before me, but hope soon to find an opportunity.

TO LADY THROCKMORTON.

Weston, April 16, 1792.

MY DEAR LADY FROG,

I THANK you for your letter, as sweet as it was short, and as sweet as good news could make it. You encourage a hope that has made me happy ever since I have entertained it. And if my wishes can hasten the event, it will not be long suspended. As to your jealousy, I mind it not, or only to be pleased with it; I shall say no more on the subject at present than this, that of all ladies living, a certain lady, whom I need not name, would be the lady of my choice for a certain gentleman, were the whole sex submitted to my election.

What a delightful anecdote is that which you tell me of a young lady detected in the very act of stealing our Catharina's praises; is it possible that she can survive the shame, the mortification of such a discovery! Can she ever see the same company again, or any company that she can suppose by the remotest probability, may have heard the tidings? If she can, she must have an assurance equal to her vanity. A lady in London stole my song on the broken Rose, or rather would have stolen, and have passed it for her own. But she too was unfortunate in her attempt; for there happened to be a female cousin of mine in company, who knew that I had written it. It is very flattering to a poet's pride, that the ladies should thus hazard every thing for the sake of appropriating his verses. I may say with Milton, that I am fallen *on evil tongues, and evil days,* being not only plundered of that which belongs to me, but being charged with that which does not. Thus it seems (and I have learned it from more quarters than one) that a report is, and has been some time current in this and the neighbouring counties, that though I have given myself the air of declaiming against the Slave Trade in the Task, I am in reality a friend to it; and last night I received a letter from Joe Rye, to inform me that I have been much traduced and calumniated on this account. Not knowing how I could better or more effectually refute the scandal, I have this

morning sent a copy to the Northampton paper, prefaced by a short letter to the printer, specifying the occasion. The verses are in honour of Mr. Wilberforce, and sufficiently expressive of my present sentiments on the subject. You are a wicked fair one for disappointing us of our expected visit, and therefore out of mere spite I will not insert them. I have been very ill these ten days, and for the same spite's sake will not tell you what ailed me. But lest you should die of a fright, I will have the mercy to tell you that I am recovering.

Mrs. G——— and her little ones are gone, but your brother is still here. He told me that he had some expectation of Sir John at Weston; if he come, I shall most heartily rejoice once more to see him at a table so many years his own.

W. C.

TO THE REV. J. JEKYLL RYE.

MY DEAR SIR, *Weston, April* 16, 1792.

I AM truly sorry that you should have suffered any apprehensions, such as your letter indicates, to molest you for a moment. I believe you to be as honest a man as lives, and consequently do not believe it possible that you could in your letter to Mr. Pitts, or any otherwise wilfully misrepresent me. In fact you did not; my opinions on the subject in question were, when I had the pleasure of seeing you, such as in that letter you stated them to be, and such they still continue.

If any man concludes, because I allow myself the use of sugar and rum, that therefore I am a friend to the *Slave Trade*, he concludes rashly, and does me great wrong; for the man lives not who abhors it more than I do. My reasons for my own practice are satisfactory to myself, and they whose practice is contrary, are, I suppose, satisfied with theirs. So far is good. Let every man act according to his own judgment and conscience; but if we condemn another for not seeing with our eyes, we are unreasonable; and if we reproach him on that account, we are uncharitable, which is a still greater evil.

I had heard, before I received the favour of yours, that such a report of me, as you mention, had spread about the country. But my informant told me that it was founded thus: The people of Olney petitioned Parliament for the abolition—my name was sought among the subscribers, but was not found—a question was asked, how that happened? Answer was made, that I had once indeed been an enemy to the Slave Trade, but had changed my mind; for that lately having read a history or an account of Africa, I had seen it there asserted, that till the commencement of that traffic the negroes, multiplying at a prodigious rate, were necessitated to devour each other; for which reason I had judged it better, that the trade should continue, than that they should be again reduced to so horrid a custom.

Now all this is a fable. I have read no such history; I never in my life read any such assertion; nor, had such an assertion presented itself to me, should I have drawn any such conclusion from it: on the contrary, bad as it were, I think it would be better the negroes should have eaten one another, than that we should carry them to market. The single reason why I did not sign the petition was, because I was never asked to do it; and the reason why I was never asked was, because I am not a parishioner of Olney.

Thus stands the matter. You will do me the justice, I dare, say, to speak of me as a man who abhors the commerce, which is now I hope in a fair way to be abolished, as often as you shall find occasion. And I beg you henceforth to do yourself the justice to believe it impossible, that I should for a moment suspect you of duplicity or misrepresentation. I have been grossly slandered, but neither by you, nor in consequence of any thing that you have either said or written. I remain therefore, still as heretofore, with great respect,

Much and truly yours, W. C

Mrs. Unwin's compliments attend you.

TO LADY HESKETH.

MY DEAREST COZ, *Weston, May* 5, 1792.

I REJOICE, as thou reasonably supposest me to do, in the matrimonial news communicated in your last. Not that it was altogether news to me, for twice I had received broad hints of it from Lady Frog by letter, and several times *vivâ voce* while she was here. But she enjoined *me* secrecy as well as *you*, and you know that all secrets are safe with me; safer far than the winds in the bags of Æolus. I know not in fact the lady whom it would give me more pleasure to call Mrs. Courtenay, than the lady in question; partly because I know her, but especially because I know her to be all that I can wish in a neighbour.

I have often observed that there is a regular alternation of good and evil in the lot of men, so that a favourable incident may be considered as the harbinger of an unfavourable one, and *vice versâ*. Dr. Madan's experience witnesses to the truth of this observation. One day he gets a broken head, and next a mitre to heal it. I rejoice that he has met with so effectual a cure, though my joy is not unmingled with concern: for till now I had some hope of seeing him, but since

I live in the North, and his episcopal call is in the West, that is a gratification I suppose which I must no longer look for.

My sonnet, which I sent you, was printed in the Northampton paper last week, and this week it produced me a complimentary one in the same paper, which served to convince me at least by the matter of it, that my own was not published without occasion, and that it had answered its purpose.

My correspondence with Hayley proceeds briskly, and is very affectionate on both sides. I expect him here in about a fortnight, and wish heartily, with Mrs. Unwin, that you would give him a meeting. I have promised him indeed that he shall find us alone, but you are one of the family.

I wish much to print the following lines in one of the daily papers. Lord S's vindication of the poor culprit in the affair of Cheit-Sing has confirmed me in the belief that he has been injuriously treated, and I think it an act merely of justice to take a little notice of him.

TO
WARREN HASTINGS, ESQ.
BY
AN OLD SCHOOLFELLOW OF HIS AT WESTMINSTER.

HASTINGS! I knew thee young, and of a mind,
While young, humane, conversable, and kind
Nor can I well believe thee, gentle *then*,
Now grown a villain, and the *worst* of men.
But rather some suspect, who have oppress'd
And worried thee, as not themselves the *best*.

If thou wilt take the pains to send them to thy news-monger, I hope thou wilt do well. Adieu!

W. C.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

Weston, May 20, 1792.

MY DEAREST OF ALL JOHNNIES,

I am not sorry that your ordination is postponed. A year's learning and wisdom, added to your present stock, will not be more than enough to satisfy the demands of your function. Neither am I sorry that you find it difficult to fix your thoughts to the serious point at all times. It proves at least that you attempt, and wish to do it, and these are good symptoms. Woe to those who enter on the ministry of the Gospel without having previously asked at least from God a mind and spirit suited to their occupation, and whose experience never differs from itself, because they are always alike vain, light, and inconsiderate. It is therefore matter of great joy to me to hear you complain of levity, and such it is to Mrs. Unwin. She is, I thank God, tolerably well, and loves you. As to the time of your journey hither, the sooner after June the better; till then we shall have company.

I forgot not my debts to your dear sister, and your aunts Balls. Greet them both with a brother's kiss, and place it to my account. I will write to them when Milton and a thousand other engagements will give me leave. Mr. Hayley is here on a visit. We have formed a friendship that I trust will last for life, and render us an edifying example to all future poets.

Adieu! Lose no time in coming after the time mentioned.

W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Weston, May 24, 1792.

I wish with all my heart, my dearest Coz, that I had not ill news for the subject of the present letter. My friend, my Mary, has again been attacked by the same disorder that threatened me last year with the loss of her, and of which you were yourself a witness. Gregson would not allow that first stroke to be paralytic, but this he acknowledges to be so; and with respect to the former, I never had myself any doubt that it was; but this has been much the severest. Her speech has been almost unintelligible from the moment that she was struck; it is with difficulty that she opens her eyes, and she can not keep them open; the muscles necessary to the purpose being contracted; and as to self-moving powers, from place to place, and the use of her right hand and arm, she has entirely lost them.

It has happened well, that of all men living the man most qualified to assist and comfort me is here, though till within these few days I never saw him, and a few weeks since had no expectation that I ever should. You have already guessed that I mean Hayley. Hayley who loves me as if he had known me from my cradle. When he returns to town, as he must, alas! too soon, he will pay his respects to you.

I will not conclude without adding that our poor patient is beginning, I hope, to recover from this stroke also; but her amendment is slow, as must be expected at her time of life and in such a disorder. I am as well myself as you have ever known me in a time of much trouble, and even better.

It was not possible to prevail on Mrs. Unwin to let me send for Dr. Kerr, but Hayley has written to his friend Dr. Austin a representation of her case, and we expect his opinion and advice to-morrow. In the mean time, we have borrowed an electrical machine from our neighbour Socket, the effect of which she tried yesterday, and the day before, and we think it has been of material service.

She was seized while Hayley and I were walking, and Mr. Greatheed, who called while we were absent, was with her.

I forgot in my last to thank thee for the proposed amendments of thy friend. Whoever he is, make my compliments to him, and thank him. The passages to which he objects have been all altered; and when he shall see them new dressed, I hope he will like them better. W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

The Lodge, May 26, 1792.

MY DEAREST COUSIN,

Knowing that you will be anxious to learn how we go on, I write a few lines to inform you that Mrs. Unwin daily recovers a little strength, and a little power of utterance; but she seems strongest, and her speech is most distinct, in a morning. Hayley has been all in all to us on this very afflictive occasion. Love him, I charge you, dearly for my sake. Where could I have found a man, except himself, who could have made himself so necessary to me in so short a time, that I absolutely know not how to live without him?

Adieu, my dear sweet Coz. Mrs. Unwin, as plainly as her poor lips can speak, sends her best love, and Hayley threatens in a few days to lay close siege to your affections in person.

W. C.

There is some hope, I find, that the Chancellor may continue in office, and I shall be glad if he does; because we have no single man worthy to succeed him.

I open my letter again to thank you, my dearest Coz, for yours just received. Though happy, as you well know, to see *you* at all times, we have no need, and I trust shall have none, to trouble you with a journey made on purpose; yet once again I am willing and desirous to believe, we shall be a happy trio at Weston; but unless necessity dictates a journey of charity, I wish all yours hither to be made for pleasure. Farewell.—Thou shalt know how we go on.

TO MRS. BODHAM.

MY DEAREST ROSE, *Weston, June* 4, 1792.

I am not such an ungrateful and insensible animal, as to have neglected you thus long without a reason.

* * * * * * *

I can not say that I am sorry that our dear Johnny finds the pulpit door shut against him at present. He is young, and can afford to wait another year; neither is it to be regretted, that his time of preparation for an office of so much importance as that of a minister of God's word should have been a little protracted. It is easier to direct the movements of a great army, than to guide a few souls to Heaven; the way is narrow, and full of snares, and the guide himself has the most difficulties to encounter. But I trust he will do well. He is single in his views, honest hearted, and desirous, by prayer and study of the Scripture, to qualify himself for the service of his great Master, who will suffer no such man to fail for want of his aid and protection Adieu. W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

ALL'S WELL; *Weston, June* 4, 1792.

Which words I place as conspicuously as possible, and prefix them to my letter, to save you the pain, my friend and brother, of a moment's anxious speculation. Poor Mary proceeds in her amendment still, and improves, I think, even at a swifter rate than when you left her. The stronger she grows, the faster she gathers strength, which is perhaps the natural course of recovery. She walked so well this morning, that she told me at my first visit she had entirely forgot her illness; and she spoke so distinctly, and had so much of her usual countenance, that, had it been possible, she would have made me forget it too.

Returned from my walk, blown to tatters—found two dear things in the study, your letter, and my Mary! She is bravely well, and your beloved epistle does us both good. I found your kind pencil note in my song-book, as soon as I came down in the morning of your departure; and Mary was vexed to the heart, that the simpletons who watched her supposed her asleep, when she was not; for she learned soon after you were gone, that you would have peeped at her, had you known her to have been awake. I perhaps might have had a peep too, and therefore was as vexed as she; but if it please God, we shall make ourselves large amends for all lost peeps by and by at Eartham.

W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, June 5, 1792.

Yesterday was a noble day with us—speech almost perfect—eyes open almost the whole day, without any effort to keep them so; and the step wonderfully improved. But the night has been almost a sleepless one, owing partly I believe to her having had as much sleep again as usual the night before; for even when she is in tolerable health she hardly ever sleeps well two nights together. I found her accordingly a little out of

spirits this morning, but still insisting on it that she is better. Indeed she always tells me so, and will probably die with those very words upon her lips. They will be true then at least, for then she will be best of all. She is now (the clock has just struck eleven) endeavouring, I believe, to get a little sleep, for which reason I do not yet let her know that I have received your letter.

Can I ever honour you enough for your zeal to serve me? Truly I think not: I am however so sensible of the love I owe you on this account, that I every day regret the acuteness of your feelings for me, convinced that they expose you to much trouble, mortification, and disappointment. I have in short a poor opinion of my destiny, as I told you when you were here; and though I believe that if any man living can do me good, you will, I can not yet persuade myself that even you will be successful in attempting it. But it is no matter, you are yourself a good which I can never value enough, and whether rich or poor in other respects, I shall always account myself better provided for than I deserve, with such a friend at my back as you. Let it please God to continue to me my William and Mary, and I will be more reasonable than to grumble.

I rose this morning wrapped round with a cloud of melancholy, and with a heart full of fears; but if I see Mary's amendment a little advanced when she rises, I shall be better.

I have just been with her again. Except that she is fatigued for want of sleep, she seems as well as yesterday. The post brings me a letter from Hurdis, who is broken-hearted for a dying sister. Had we eyes sharp enough, we should see the arrows of Death flying in all directions, and account it a wonder that we and our friends escape them a single day. W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, June 7, 1792.

Of what materials can you suppose me made, if after all the rapid proofs that you have given me of your friendship, I do not love you with all my heart, and regret your absence continually? But you must permit me nevertheless to be melancholy now and then; or if you will not, I must be so without your permission; for that sable thread is so intermixed with the very thread of my existence, as to be inseparable from it, at least while I exist in the body. Be content therefore; let me sigh and groan, but always be sure that I love you! You will be well assured that I should not have indulged myself in the rhapsody about myself, and my melancholy, had my present mood been of that complexion, or had not our poor Mary seemed still to advance in her recovery. So in fact she does, and has performed several little feats to-day, such as either she could not perform at all, or very feebly, while you were with us.

I shall be glad if you have seen Johnny, as I call him, my Norfolk cousin; he is a sweet lad, but as shy as a bird. It costs him always two or three days to open his mouth before a stranger; but when he does, he is sure to please by the innocent cheerfulness of his conversation. His sister too is one of my idols, for the resemblance she bears to my mother.

Mary and you have all my thoughts; and how should it be otherwise? She looks well, is better, and loves you dearly. Adieu, my brother. W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, June 10, 1792.

I do indeed anxiously wish that every thing you do may prosper; and should I at last prosper by your means, shall taste double sweetness in prosperity for that reason.

I rose this morning, as I usually do, with a mind all in sables. In this mood I presented myself to Mary's bedside, whom I found, though after many hours lying awake, yet cheerful, and not to be affected with my desponding humour. It is a great blessing to us both that, poor feeble thing as she is, she has a most invincible courage, and a trust in God's goodness that nothing shakes. She is now in the study, and is certainly in some degree better than she was yesterday, but how to measure that little I know not, except by saying that it is just perceptible.

I am glad that you have seen my Johnny of Norfolk, because I know it will be a comfort to you to have seen your successor. He arrived, to my great joy, yesterday; and not having bound himself to any particular time of going, will, I hope, stay long with us. You are now once more snug in your retreat, and I give you joy of your return to it, after the bustle in which you have lived since you left Weston. Weston mourns your absence, and will mourn it till she sees you again. What is to become of Milton I know not; I do nothing but scribble to you, and seem to have no relish for any other employment. I have however in pursuit of your idea to compliment Darwin, put a few stanzas* together, which I shall subjoin; you will easily give them all that you find they want, and match the song with another.

I am now going to walk with Johnny, much cheered since I began writing to you, and by Mary's looks and good spirits. W. C.

* Lines addressed to Dr. Darwin. See Poems.

TO LADY HESKETH.

MY DEAREST COZ, *Weston, June* 11, 1792.

Thou art ever in my thoughts, whether I am writing to thee or not; and my correspondence seems to grow upon me at such a rate, that I am not able to address thee so often as I would. In fact, I live only to write letters. Hayley is as you see added to the number, and to him I write almost as duly as I rise in the morning; nor is he only added, but his friend Carwardine also—Carwardine the generous, the disinterested, the friendly. I seem in short to have stumbled suddenly on a race of heroes, men who resolve to have no interests of their own till mine are served.

But I will proceed to other matters, that concern me more intimately, and more immediately, than all that can be done for me either by the great or the small, or by both united. Since I wrote last, Mrs. Unwin has been continually improving in strength, but at so gradual a rate that I can only mark it by saying that she moves about every day with less support than the former. Her recovery is most of all retarded by want of sleep. On the whole I believe she goes on as well as could be expected, though not quite well enough to satisfy me. And Dr. Austin, speaking from the reports I have made of her, says he has no doubt of her restoration.

During the last two months, I seem to myself to have been in a dream. It has been a most eventful period, and fruitful to an uncommon degree, both in good and evil. I have been very ill, and suffered excruciating pain. I recovered, and became quite well again. I received within my doors a man, but lately an entire stranger, and who now loves me as his brother, and forgets himself to serve me. Mrs. Unwin has been seized with an illness that for many days threatened to deprive me of her, and to cast a gloom, an impenetrable one, on all my future prospects. She is now granted to me again. A few days since I should have thought the moon might have descended into my purse as likely as any emolument, and now it seems not impossible. All this has come to pass with such rapidity as events move with in romance indeed, but not often in real life. Events of all sorts creep or fly exactly as God pleases.

To the foregoing I have to add in conclusion the arrival of my Johnny, just when I wanted him most, and when only a few days before I had no expectation of him. He came to dinner on Saturday, and I hope I shall keep him long. What comes next I know not; but shall endeavour, as you exhort me, to look for good, and I know I shall have your prayers that I may not be disappointed.

Haley tells me you begin to be jealous of him, lest I should love him more than I love you, and bids me say, "that should I do so, you in revenge must love him more than I do."—Him I know you will love, and me, because you have such a habit of doing it that you can not help it.

Adieu! My knuckles ache with letter writing. With my poor patient's affectionate remembrances, and Johnny's,

I am ever thine, W. C.

TO WILLIAM HALEY, ESQ.

Weston, June 19, 1792.

* * * * Thus have I filled a whole page to my dear William of Eartham, and have not said a syllable yet about my Mary. A sure sign that she goes on well. Be it known to you that we have these four days discarded our sedan with two elbows. Here is no more carrying, or being carried, but she walks up stairs boldly, with one hand upon the balustrade, and the other under my arm, and in like manner she comes down in a morning. Still I confess she is feeble, and misses much of her former strength. The weather too is sadly against her: it deprives her of many a good turn in the orchard, and fifty times have I wished this very day, that Dr. Darwin's scheme of giving rudders and sails to the Ice-islands, that spoil all our summers, were actually put in practice. So should we have gentle airs instead of churlish blasts; and those everlasting sources of bad weather being once navigated into the southern hemisphere, my Mary would recover as fast again. We are both of your mind respecting the journey to Eartham, and think that July, if by that time she have strength for the journey, will be better than August. We shall have more long days before us, and them we shall want as much for our return as for our going forth. This however must be left to the Giver of all good. If our visit to you be according to his will, he will smooth our way before us, and appoint the time of it; and thus I speak, not because I wish to seem a saint in your eyes, but because my poor Mary actually is one, and would not set her foot over the threshold, to save her life, unless she had, or thought she had, God's free permission. With that she would go through floods and fire, though without it she would be afraid of every thing:—afraid even to visit you, dearly as she loves, and much as she longs to see you. W. C.

TO WILLIAM HALEY, ESQ.

Weston, June 27, 1792.

Well then—let us talk about this journey to Eartham. You wish me to settle the time of it, and I wish with all my heart to be able to do so,

living in hopes meanwhile that I shall be able to do it soon. But some little time must necessarily intervene. Our Mary must be able to walk alone, to cut her own food, to feed herself, and to wear her own shoes, for at present she wears mine. All things considered, my friend and brother, you will see the expediency of waiting a litle before we set off to Eartham. We mean indeed before that day arrives to make a trial of the strength of her head, how far it may be able to bear the motion of a carriage, a motion that it has not felt these seven years. I grieve that we are thus circumstanced, and that we can not gratify ourselves in a delightful and innocent project without all these precautions; but when we have leaf-gold to handle, we must do it tenderly.

I thank you, my brother, both for presenting my authorship to your friend Guy, and for the excellent verses with which you have inscribed your present. There are none neater or better turned —with what shall I requite you? I have nothing to send you but a gimcrack, which I have prepared for my bride and bridegroom neighbours, who are expected to-morrow. You saw in my book a poem entitled Catharina, which concluded with a wish that we had her for a neighbour; this therefore is called Catharina; the second part. On her marriage to George Courtenay, Esq.*

TO WILLIAM HALEY, ESQ.

Weston, July 4, 1792.

I know not how you proceed in your life of Milton, but I suppose not very rapidly, for while you were here, and since you left us, you have had no other theme but me. As for myself, except my letters to you, and the nuptial song I inserted in my last, I have literally done nothing since I saw you. Nothing I mean in the writing way, though a great deal in another; that is to say, in attending my poor Mary, and endeavouring to nurse her up for a journey to Eartham. In this I have hitherto succeeded tolerably well, and had rather carry this point completely, than be the most famous editor of Milton that the world has ever seen, or shall see.

Your humorous descant upon my art of wishing made us merry, and consequently did good to us both. I sent my wish to the Hall yesterday. They are excellent neighbours, and so friendly to me, that I wished to gratify them. When I went to pay my first visit, George flew into the court to meet me, and when I entered the parlour, Catharina sprang into my arms. W. C.

* See Poems.

TO WILLIAM HALEY, ESQ.

Weston, July 15, 1792.

The progress of the old nurse in Terence is very much like the progress of my poor patient in the road of recovery. I can not indeed say that she moves, but advances not, for advances are certainly made, but the progress of a week is hardly perceptible. I know not therefore at present what to say about this long postponed journey. The utmost that it is safe for me to say at this moment is this—You know that you are dear to us both; true it is that you are so, and equally true that the very instant we feel ourselves at liberty we will fly to Eartham. I have been but once within the Hall door since the Courtenays came home, much as I have been pressed to dine there, and have hardly escaped giving a little offence by declining it; but though I should offend all the world by my obstinacy in this instance, I would not leave my poor Mary alone. Johnny serves me as a representative, and him I send without scruple. As to the affair of Milton, I know not what will become of it. I wrote to Johnson a week since, to tell him that the interruption of Mrs. Unwin's illness still continuing, and being likely to continue, I knew not when I should be able to proceed. The translations (I said) were finished, except the revisal of a part.

God bless your dear little boy and poet! I thank him for exercising his drawing genius upon me, and shall be still happier to thank him in person.

> Abbot is painting me so true
> That (trust me) you would stare,
> And hardly know, at the first view,
> If I were here, or there.

I have sat twice; and the few, who have seen the copy of me, are much struck with the resemblance. He is a sober, quiet man, which, considering that I must have him at least a week longer for an inmate, is a great comfort to me.

My Mary sends you her best love. She can walk now, leaning on my arm only, and her speech is certainly much improved. I long to see you. Why can not you and dear Tom spend the remainder of the summer with us? We might then all set off for Eartham merrily together. But I retract this, conscious that I am unreasonable. It is a wretched world, and what we would, is almost always what we can not.

Adieu! Love me, and be sure of a return.

W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, July 22, 1792.

This important affair, my dear brother, is at last decided, and we are coming. Wednesday se'n-

night, if nothing occur to make a later day necessary, is the day fixed for our journey. Our rate of traveling must depend on Mary's ability to bear it. Our mode of traveling will occupy three days unavoidably, for we shall come in a coach. Abbot finishes my picture to-morrow; on Wednesday he returns to town, and is commissioned to order one down for us, with four steeds to draw it;

> ——"Hollow pamper'd jades of Asia,
> That can not go but forty miles a day."

Send us our route, for I am as ignorant of it almost as if I were in a strange country. We shall reach St. Alban's I suppose the first day; say where we must finish our second day's journey, and at what inn we may best repose? As to the end of the third day, we know where that will find us, viz. in the arms, and under the roof of our beloved Hayley.

General Cowper, having heard a rumour of this intended migration, desires to meet me on the road, that we may once more see each other. He lives at Ham, near Kingston. Shall we go through Kingston, or near it? For I would give him as little trouble as possible, though he offers very kindly to come as far as Barnet for that purpose. Nor must I forget Carwardine, who so kindly desired to be informed what way we should go. On what point of the road will it be easiest for him to find us? On all these points you must be my oracle. My friend and brother, we shall overwhelm you with our numbers; this is all the trouble that I have left. My Johnny of Norfolk, happy in the thought of accompanying us, would be broken-hearted to be left behind.

In the midst of all these solicitudes I laugh to think what they are made of, and what an important thing it is for me to travel. Other men steal away from their homes silently, and make no disturbance; but when I move, houses are turned upside down, maids are turned out of their beds, all the counties through which I pass appear to be in an uproar—Surry greets me by the mouth of the General, and Essex by that of Carwardine. How strange does all this seem to a man who has seen no bustle, and made none, for twenty years together. Adieu. W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, July 29, 1792.

> Through floods and flames to your retreat,
> I win my desp'rate way,
> And when we meet, if e'er we meet,
> Will echo your huzza!

You will wonder at the word *desp'rate* in the second line, and at the *if* in the third; but could you have any conception of the fears I have had to battle with, of the dejection of spirits that I have suffered concerning this journey, you would wonder much more that I still courageously persevere in my resolution to undertake it. Fortunately for my intentions, it happens that as the day approaches my terrors abate; for had they continued to be what they were a week since, I must after all have disappointed you; and was actually once on the verge of doing it. I have told you something of my nocturnal experiences, and assure you now that they were hardly ever more terrific than on this occasion. Prayer has, however, opened my passage at last, and obtained for me a degree of confidence that I trust will prove a comfortable viaticum to me all the way. On Wednesday, therefore, we set forth.

The terrors that I have spoken of would appear ridiculous to most; but to you they will not, for you are a reasonable creature, and know well that to whatever cause it be owing (whether to constitution, or by God's express appointment) I am hunted by spiritual hounds in the night season. I can not help it. You will pity me, and wish it were otherwise; and though you may think that there is much of the imaginary in it, will not deem it for that reason an evil less to be lamented—— So much for fears and distresses. Soon I hope they shall all have a joyful termination, and I, my Mary, my Johnny, and my dog, be skipping with delight at Eartham!

Well! this picture is at last finished, and well finished, I can assure you. Every creature that has seen it has been astonished at the resemblance Sam's boy bowed to it, and Beau walked up to it, wagging his tail as he went, and evidently showing that he acknowledged its likeness to his master. It is a half length, as it is technically, but absurdly called; that is to say, it gives all but the foot and ankle. To-morrow it goes to town, and will hang some months at Abbot's, when it will be sent to its due destination in Norfolk.

I hope, or rather wish, that at Eartham I may recover that habit of study, which, inveterate as it once seemed, I now seem to have lost—lost to such a degree that it is even painful to me to think of what it will cost me to acquire it again.

Adieu! my dear, dear Hayley; God give us a happy meeting. Mary sends her love—She is in pretty good plight this morning, having slept well, and for her part has no fears at all about the journey. Ever yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. MR. GREATHEED.

MY DEAR SIR, *Eartham, Aug.* 6, 1792.

Having first thanked you for your affectionate and acceptable letter, I will proceed, as well as I can, to answer your equally affectionate request that I would send you early news of our arrival at Eartham. Here we are in the most elegant man-

sion that I have ever inhabited, and surrounded by the most delightful pleasure grounds that I have ever seen; but which, dissipated as my powers of thought are at present, I will not undertake to describe. It shall suffice me to say that they occupy three sides of a hill, which in Buckinghamshire might well pass for a mountain, and from the summit of which is beheld a most magnificent landscape bounded by the sea, and in one part of it by the Isle of Wight, which may also be seen plainly from the window of the library in which I am writing.

It pleased God to carry us both through the journey with far less difficulty and inconvenience than I expected. I began it indeed with a thousand fears, and when we arrived the first evening at Barnet, found myself oppressed in spirit to a degree that could hardly be exceeded. I saw Mrs. Unwin weary, as she might well be, and heard such a variety of noises, both within the house and without, that I concluded she would get no rest. But I was mercifully disappointed. She rested, though not well, yet sufficiently; and when we finished our next day's journey at Ripley, we were both in better condition, both of body and mind, than on the day preceding. At Ripley we found a quiet inn, that housed, as it happened, that night, no company but ourselves. There we slept well, and rose perfectly refreshed. And except some terrors that I felt at passing over the Sussex hills by moonlight, met with little to complain of till we arrived about ten o'clock at Eartham. Here we are as happy as it is in the power of terrestrial good to make us. It is almost a Paradise in which we dwell; and our reception has been the kindest that it was possible for friendship and hospitality to contrive. Our host mentions you with great respect, and bids me tell you that he esteems you highly. Mrs. Unwin, who is, I think, in some points, already the better for her excursion, unites with mine her best compliments both to yourself and Mrs. Greatheed. I have much to see and enjoy before I can be perfectly apprised of all the delights of Eartham, and will therefore now subscribe myself,

Yours, my dear sir, with great sincerity, W. C.

TO MRS. COURTENAY.

Eartham, August 12, 1792.

MY DEAREST CATHARINA,

Though I have traveled far, nothing did I see in my travels that surprised me half so agreeably as your kind letter; for high as my opinion of your good-nature is, I had no hopes of hearing from you till I should have written first. A pleasure which I intended to allow myself the first opportunity.

After three days' confinement in a coach, and suffering as we went all that could be suffered from excessive heat and dust, we found ourselves late in the evening at the door of our friend Hayley. In every other respect the journey was extremely pleasant. At the Mitre in Barnet, where we lodged the first evening, we found our friend Mr. Rose, who had walked thither from his house in Chancery-lane to meet us; and at Kingston, where we dined the second day, I found my old and much valued friend General Cowper, whom I had not seen in thirty years, and but for this journey should never have seen again. Mrs. Unwin, on whose account I had a thousand fears before we set out, suffered as little from fatigue as myself and begins I hope already to feel some beneficial effects from the air of Eartham, and the exercise that she takes in one of the most delightful pleasure-grounds in the world. They occupy three sides of a hill, lofty enough to command a view of the sea, which skirts the horizon to a length of many miles, with the Isle of Wight at the end of it. The inland scene is equally beautiful, consisting of a large and deep valley well cultivated, and enclosed by magnificent hills, all crowned with wood. I had, for my part, no conception that a poet could be the owner of such a Paradise; and his house is as elegant as his scenes are charming.

But think not, my dear Catharina, that amidst all these beauties I shall lose the remembrance of the peaceful, but less splendid Weston. Your precincts will be as dear to me as ever, when I return; though when that day will arrive I know not, our host being determined, as I plainly see, to keep us as long as possible. Give my best love to your husband. Thank him most kindly for his attention to the old bard of Greece, and pardon me that I do not send you now an epitaph for Fop. I am not sufficiently recollected to compose even a bagatelle at present; but in due time you shall receive it.

Hayley, who will some time or other I hope see you at Weston, is already prepared to love you both, and being passionately fond of music, longs much to hear you. Adieu! W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Eartham, Aug.* 14, 1792.

Romney is here; it would add much to my happiness if you were of the party; I have prepared Hayley to think highly, that is justly of you, and the time I hope will come, when you will supersede all need of my recommendation.

Mrs. Unwin gathers strength. I have indeed great hopes from the air and exercise which this fine season affords her opportunity to use, that ere we return she will be herself again. W. C

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

Eartham, August 18, 1792.

Wishes in this world are generally vain, and in the next we shall make none. Every day I wish you were of our party, knowing how happy you would be in a place where we have nothing to do but enjoy beautiful scenery, and converse agreeably.

Mrs. Unwin's health continues to improve; and even I, who was well when I came, find myself still better. Yours, W. C.

TO MRS. COURTENAY.

Eartham, August 25, 1792.

Without waiting for an answer to my last, I send my dear Catharina the epitaph she desired, composed as well as I could compose it in a place where every object, being still new to me, distracts my attention, and makes me as awkward at verse as if I had never dealt in it. Here it is.*

I am here, as I told you in my last, delightfully situated, and in the enjoyment of all that the most friendly hospitality can impart; yet do I neither forget Weston, nor my friends at Weston; on the contrary, I have at length, though much and kindly pressed to make a longer stay, determined on the day of our departure—on the seventeenth of September we shall leave Eartham; four days will be necessary to bring us home again, for I am under a promise to General Cowper to dine with him on the way, which can not be done comfortably, either to him or to ourselves, unless we sleep that night at Kingston.

The air of this place has been, I believe, beneficial to us both. I indeed was in tolerable health before I set out, but have acquired since I came both a better appetite, and a knack of sleeping almost as much in a single night as formerly in two. Whether double quantities of that article will be favourable to me as a poet, time must show. About myself however I care little, being made of materials so tough, as not to threaten me even now, at the end of so many *lustrums*, with any thing like a speedy dissolution. My chief concern has been about Mrs. Unwin, and my chief comfort at this moment is, that she likewise has received I hope considerable benefit by the journey.

Tell my dear George that I begin to long to behold him again; and did it not savour of ingratitude to the friend, under whose roof I am so happy at present, should be impatient to find myself once more under yours.

Adieu, my dear Catharina. I have nothing to add in the way of news, except that Romney has drawn me in crayons; by the suffrage of all here, extremely like. W. C.

* Epitaph on Fop, a dog belonging to Lady Throckmorton. See Poems.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Eartham, August 26, 1792.

I know not how it is, my dearest Coz, but in a new scene, and surrounded by strange objects, I find my powers of thinking dissipated to a degree that makes it difficult to me even to write a letter, and even a letter to you; but such a letter as I can, I will, and have the fairest chance to succeed this morning, Hayley, Romney, Hayley's son, and Beau, being all gone together to the sea for bathing. The sea, you must know, is nine miles off, so that unless stupidity prevent, I shall have an opportunity to write not only to you, but to poor Hurdis also, who is broken-hearted for the loss of his favourite sister, lately dead: and whose letter, giving an account of it, which I received yesterday, drew tears from the eyes of all our party. My only comfort respecting even yourself is, that you write in good spirits, and assure me that you are in a state of recovery; otherwise I should mourn not only for Hurdis, but for myself, lest a certain event should reduce me, and in a short time too, to a situation as distressing as his; for though nature designed you only for my cousin, you have had a sister's place in my affections ever since I knew you. The reason is, I suppose, that having no sister, the daughter of my own mother, I thought it proper to have one, the daughter of yours. Certain it is, that I can by no means afford to lose you; and that unless you will be upon honour with me, to give me always a true account of yourself, at least when we are not together, I shall always be unhappy, because always suspicious that you deceive me.

Now for ourselves. I am, without the least dissimulation, in good health; my spirits are about as good as you have ever seen them; and if increase of appetite and a double portion of sleep be advantageous, such are the advantages that I have received from this migration. As to that gloominess of mind, which I have had these twenty years, it cleaves to me even here; and could I be translated to Paradise, unless I left my body behind me, would cleave to me even there also. It is my companion for life, and nothing will ever divorce us. So much for myself. Mrs. Unwin is evidently the better for her jaunt, though by no means as she was before this last attack; still wanting help when she would rise from her seat, and a support in walking; but she is able to use more exercise than she could at home, and moves with rather a less tottering step. God knows what he designs for me; but when I see those, who are dearer to me

than myself, distempered and enfeebled, and myself as strong as in the days of my youth, I tremble for the solitude in which a few years may place me. I wish her and you to die before me, indeed, but not till I am more likely to follow immediately. Enough of this!

Romney has drawn me in crayons, and in the opinion of all here, with his best hand, and with the most exact resemblance possible.

The seventeenth of September is the day on which I intend to leave Eartham. We shall then have been six weeks resident here; a holiday time long enough for a man who has much to do. And now farewell! W. C.

P. S. Hayley, whose love for me seems to be truly that of a brother, has given me his picture, drawn by Romney about fifteen years ago; an admirable likeness.

TO THE REV. MR. HURDIS.

MY DEAR SIR, *Eartham, August* 26, 1790.

Your kind but very affecting letter found me not at Weston, to which place it was directed, but in a bower of my friend Hayley's garden at Eartham, where I was sitting with Mrs. Unwin. We both knew the moment we saw it from whom it came; and observing a red seal, both comforted ourselves that all was well at Burwash: but we soon felt that we were called not to rejoice, but to mourn with you—we do indeed sincerely mourn with you; and if it will afford you any consolation to know it, you may be assured that every eye here has testified what our hearts have suffered for you. Your loss is great, and your disposition I perceive such as exposes you to feel the whole weight of it; I will not add to your sorrow by a vain attempt to assuage it; your own good sense and the piety of your principles will, of course, suggest to you the most powerful motives of acquiescence in the will of God. You will be sure to recollect that the stroke, severe as it is, is not the stroke of an enemy, but of a father; and will find I trust hereafter that like a father he has done you good by it. Thousands have been able to say, and myself as loud as any of them, it has been good for me that I was afflicted; but time is necessary to work us to this persuasion, and in due time it shall be yours. Mr. Hayley, who tenderly sympathises with you, has enjoined me to send you as pressing an invitation as I can frame, to join me at this place. I have every motive to wish your consent. Both your benefit and my own, which I believe would be abundantly answered by your coming, ought to make me eloquent in such a cause. Here you will find silence and retirement in perfection, when you would seek them; and here such company as I have no doubt would suit you; all cheerful, but not noisy; and all alike disposed to love you: you and I seem to have here a fair opportunity of meeting. It were a pity we should be in the same county, and not come together. I am here till the seventeenth of September, an interval that will afford you time to make the necessary arrangements, and to gratify me at last with an interview which I have long desired. Let me hear from you soon, that I may have double pleasure, the pleasure of expecting as well as that of seeing you.

Mrs. Unwin, I thank God, though still a sufferer by her last illness, is much better, and has received considerable benefit by the air of Eartham. She adds to mine her affectionate compliments, and joins me and Hayley in this invitation.

Mr. Romney is here, and a young man, a cousin of mine. I tell you who we are, that you may not be afraid of us.

Adieu! May the Comforter of all the afflicted who seek him, be yours. God bless you. W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

MY DEAREST COUSIN, *Eartham, Sept.* 9, 1792.

I DETERMINE, if possible, to send you one more letter, or at least, if possible, once more to send you something like one, before we leave Eartham. But I am in truth so unaccountably local in the use of my pen, that, like the man in the fable, who could leap well no where but at Rhodes, I am incapable of writing at all, except at Weston. This is, as I have already told you, a delightful place; more beautiful scenery I have never beheld, nor expect to behold; but the charms of it, uncommon as they are, have not in the least alienated my affections from Weston. The genius of that place suits me better, it has an air of snug concealment, in which a disposition like mine feels itself peculiarly gratified; whereas here I see from every window, woods like forests, and hills like mountains, a wildness, in short, that rather increases my natural melancholy, and which, were it not for the agreeables I find within, would soon convince me that mere change of place can avail me little. Accordingly I have not looked out for a house in Sussex, nor shall.

The intended day of our departure continues to be the seventeenth. I hope to reconduct Mrs. Unwin to the Lodge with her health considerably mended: but it is in the article of speech chiefly, and in her powers of walking, that she is sensible of much improvement. Her sight and her hand still fail her, so that she can neither read nor work; mortifying circumstances both to her, who is never willingly idle.

On the eighteenth I purpose to dine with the

General, and to rest that night at Kingston; but the pleasure I shall have in the interview will hardly be greater than the pain I shall feel at the end of it, for we shall part probably to meet no more.

Johnny, I know, has told you that Mr. Hurdis is here. Distressed by the loss of his sister, he has renounced the place where she died for ever, and is about to enter on a new course of life at Oxford. You would admire him much He is gentle in his manners, and delicate in his person, resembling our poor friend Unwin, both in face and figure, more than any one I have ever seen. But he has not, at least he has not at present, his vivacity.

I have corresponded since I came here with Mrs. Courtenay, and had yesterday a very kind letter from her.

Adieu, my dear: may God bless you. Write to me as soon as you can after the twentieth. I shall then be at Weston, and indulging myself in the hope that I shall ere long see you there also.

W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

The Sun, at Kingston, Sept. 18, 1792.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

WITH no sinister accident to retard or terrify us, we find ourselves, at a quarter before one, arrived safe at Kingston. I left you with a heavy heart, and with a heavy heart took leave of our dear Tom, at the bottom of the chalk-hill. But soon after this last separation my troubles gushed from my eyes, and then I was better.

We must now prepare for our visit to the General. I add no more therefore than our dearest remembrances and prayers that God may bless you and yours, and reward you an hundred-fold for all your kindness. Tell Tom I shall always hold him dear for his affectionate attentions to Mrs. Unwin. From her heart the memory of him can never be erased. Johnny loves you all, and has his share in all these acknowledgments. Adieu.

W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

MY DEAR HAYLEY, *Weston, Sept.* 21, 1792.

CHAOS himself, even the Chaos of Milton, is not surrounded with more confusion, nor has a mind more completely in a hubbub, than I experience at the present moment. At our first arrival, after long absence, we find an hundred orders to servants necessary, a thousand things to be restored to their proper places, and an endless variety of minutiæ to be adjusted; which, though individually of little importance, are most momentous in the aggregate. In these circumstances I find myself so indisposed to writing, that save to yourself I would on no account attempt it; but to you I will give such a recital as I can of all that has passed since I sent you that short note from Kingston, knowing that if it be a perplexed recital, you will consider the cause, and pardon it. I will begin with a remark in which I am inclined to think you will agree with me, that there is sometimes more true heroism passing in a corner, and on occasions that make no noise in the world, than has often been exercised by those whom that world esteems her greatest heroes, and on occasions the most illustrious; I hope so at least; for all the heroism I have to boast, and all the opportunities I have of displaying any, are of a private nature. After writing the note I immediately began to prepare for my appointed visit to Ham; but the struggles that I had with my own spirit, labouring as I did under the most dreadful dejection, are never to be told. I would have given the world to have been excused. I went, however, and carried my point against myself with a heart riven asunder—I have reasons for all this anxiety which I can not relate now. The visit however passed off well, and we returned in the dark to Kingston. I with a lighter heart than I had known since my departure from Eartham, and Mary too, for she had suffered hardly less than myself, and chiefly on my account. That night we rested well in our inn, and at twenty minutes after eight next morning set off for London; exactly at ten we reached Mr. Rose's door; we drank a dish of chocolate with him, and proceeded, Mr. Rose riding with us as far as St. Alban's. From this time we met with no impediment. In the dark, and in a storm, at eight at night, we found ourselves at our own back door. Mrs. Unwin was very near slipping out of the chair in which she was taken from the chaise, but at last was landed safe. We all have had a good night, and are all well this morning.

God bless you, my dearest brother. W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

MY DEAR HAYLEY, *Weston, Oct.* 2, 1792.

A BAD night, succeeded by an east wind, and a sky all in sables, have such an effect upon my spirits, that if I did not consult my own comfort more than yours, I should not write to-day, for I shall not entertain you much: yet your letter, though containing no very pleasant tidings, has afforded me some relief. It tells me, indeed, that you have been dispirited yourself, and that poor little Tom, the faithful squire of my Mary, has been seriously indisposed; all this grieves me, but then there is a warmth of heart, and a kindness in it, that do me good. I will endeavour not to

repay you in notes of sorrow and despondence, though all my sprightly chords seem broken. In truth, one day excepted, I have not seen the day when I have been cheerful, since I left you. My spirits, I think, are almost constantly lower than they were: the approach of winter is perhaps the cause; and if it is, I have nothing better to expect for a long time to come.

Yesterday was a day of assignation with myself, the day of which I said some days before it came, when that day comes I will begin my dissertations. Accordingly when it came I prepared to do so; filled a letter-case with fresh paper, furnished myself with a pretty good pen, and replenished my ink-bottle; but partly from one cause, and partly from another, chiefly however from distress and dejection, after writing and obliterating about six lines, in the composition of which I spent near an hour, I was obliged to relinquish the attempt. An attempt so unsuccessful could have no other effect than to dishearten me, and it has had that effect to such a degree that I know not when I shall find courage to make another. At present I shall certainly abstain, since at present I can not well afford to expose myself to the danger of a fresh mortification. W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, Oct. 13, 1792.

I began a letter to you yesterday, my dearest brother, and proceeded through two sides of the sheet; but so much of my nervous fever found its way into it, that looking it over this morning I determined not to send it.

I have risen, though not in good spirits, yet in better than I generally do of late, and therefore will not address you in the melancholy tone that belongs to my worst feelings.

I began to be restless about your portrait, and to say, how long shall I have to wait for it? I wished it here for many reasons: the sight of it will be a comfort to me, for I not only love, but am proud of you, as of a conquest made in my old age. Johnny goes to town on Monday, on purpose to call on Romney, to whom he shall give all proper information concerning its conveyance hither. The name of a man, whom I esteem as I do Romney, ought not to be unmusical in my ears; but his name will be so, till I shall have paid him a debt justly due to him, by doing such poetical honours to it as I intend. Heaven knows when that intention will be executed, for the Muse is still as obdurate and as coy as ever.

Your kind postscript is just arrived, and gives me great pleasure. When I can not see you myself, it seems some comfort however that you have been seen by another known to me; and who will tell me in a few days that he has seen you. Your wishes to disperse my melancholy would, I am sure, prevail, did that event depend on the warmth and sincerity with which you frame them; but it has baffled both wishes and prayers, and those the most fervent that could be made, so many years, that the case seems hopeless. But no more of this at present.

Your verses to Austen are as sweet as the honey that they accompany; kind, friendly, witty, and elegant. When shall I be able to do the like? perhaps when my Mary, like your Tom, shall cease to be an invalid, I may recover a power at least to do something. I sincerely rejoice in the dear little man's restoration. My Mary continues, I hope, to mend a little. W. C.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

my dearest johnny, *Weston, Oct.* 19, 1792.

You are too useful when you are here not to be missed on a hundred occasions daily: and too much domesticated with us not to be regretted always. I hope therefore that your month or six weeks will not be like many that I have known, capable of being drawn out into any length whatever, and productive of nothing but disappointment.

I have done nothing since you went, except that I have composed the better half of a sonnet to Romney; yet even this ought to bear an earlier date, for I began to be haunted with a desire to do it long before we came out of Sussex, and have daily attempted it ever since.

It would be well for the reading part of the world, if the writing part were, many of them, as dull as I am. Yet even this small produce, which my steril intellect has hardly yielded at last, may serve to convince you that in point of spirits I am not worse.

In fact, I am a little better. The powders and the laudanum together have, for the present at least, abated the fever that consumes them; and in measure as the fever abates, I acquire a less discouraging view of things, and with it a little power to exert myself.

In the evenings I read Baker's Chronicle to Mrs. Unwin, having no other history, and hope in time to be as well versed in it as his admirer Sir Roger de Coverley. W. C.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

my dear johnny, *Weston, Oct.* 22, 1792.

Here am I with I know not how many letters to answer, and no time to do it in. I exhort you, therefore, to set a proper value on this, as proving

your priority in my attentions, though in other respects likely to be of little value.

You do well to sit for your picture, and give very sufficient reasons for doing it; you will also, I doubt not, take care that when future generations shall look at it, some spectator or other shall say, this is the picture of a good man, and a useful one.

And now God bless you, my dear Johnny. I proceed much after the old rate; rising cheerless and distressed in the morning, and brightening a little as the day goes on. Adieu. W. C.

TO WILLIAM HALEY, ESQ.

Weston, Oct. 28, 1792.

Nothing done, my dearest brother, nor likely to be done at present; yet I purpose in a day or two to make another attempt, to which however I shall address myself with fear and trembling, like a man who, having sprained his wrist, dreads to use it. I have not, indeed, like such a man, injured myself by any extraordinary exertion, but seem as much enfeebled as if I had. The consciousness that there is so much to do, and nothing done, is a burthen that I am not able to bear. Milton especially is my grievance, and I might almost as well be haunted by his ghost, as goaded with such continual reproaches for neglecting him. I will therefore begin; I will do my best; and if, after all, that best prove good for nothing, I will even send the notes, worthless as they are, that I have made already, a measure very disagreeable to myself, and to which nothing but necessity shall compel me. I shall rejoice to see those new samples of your biography, which you give me to expect.

Allons! Courage!—Here comes something however; produced after a gestation as long as that of a pregnant woman. It is the debt long unpaid; the compliment due to Romney; and if it has your approbation, I will send it, or you may send it for me. I must premise, however, that I intended nothing less than a sonnet when I began. I know not why, but I said to myself, it shall not be a sonnet; accordingly I attempted it in one sort of measure, then in a second, then in a third, till I had made the trial in half a dozen different kinds of shorter verse, and behold it is a sonnet at last. The fates would have it so.* W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

My dear friend, *Weston, Nov.* 9, 1792.

I wish that I were as industrious, and as much occupied as you, though in a different way; but it is not so with me. Mrs. Unwin's great debility (who is not yet able to move without assistance) is of itself a hindrance such as would effectually disable me. Till she can work and read, and fill up her time as usual (all which is at present entirely out of her power,) I may now and then find time to write a letter, but I shall write nothing more. I can not sit with my pen in my hand, and my books before me, while she is in effect in solitude, silent, and looking at the fire. To this hindrance that other has been added, of which you are already aware, a want of spirits, such as I have never known, when I was not absolutely laid by, since I commenced an author. How long I shall be continued in these uncomfortable circumstances is known only to Him who, as he will, disposes of us all. I may be yet able perhaps to prepare the first book of the Paradise Lost for the press before it will be wanted; and Johnson himself seems to think there will be no haste for the second. But poetry is my favourite employment, and all my poetical operations are in the mean time suspended, for while a work to which I have bound myself remains unaccomplished I can do nothing else.

Johnson's plan of prefixing my phiz to the new edition of my Poems is by no means a pleasant one to me, and so I told him in a letter I sent him from Eartham, in which I assured him that my objections to it would not be easily surmounted. But if you judge that it may really have an effect in advancing the sale, I would not be so squeamish as to suffer the spirit of prudery to prevail in me to his disadvantage. Somebody told an author, I forgot whom, that there was more vanity in refusing his picture, than in granting it, on which he instantly complied. I do not perfectly feel all the force of the argument, but it shall content me that he did.

I do most sincerely rejoice in the success of your publication, and have no doubt that my prophecy concerning your success in greater matters will be fulfilled. We are naturally pleased when our friends approve what we approve ourselves; how much then must I be pleased, when you speak so kindly of Johnny! I know him to be all that you think him, and love him entirely.

Adieu! We expect you at Christmas, and shall therefore rejoice when Christmas comes. Let no thing interfere. Ever yours, W. C.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

Weston, Nov. 20, 1792.

My dearest Johnny,

I give you many thanks for your rhymes, and for your verses without rhyme; for your poetical

* Here followed the Sonnet to George Romney, Esq. See Poems.

dialogue between wood and stone; between Homer's head, and the head of Samuel; kindly intended, I know well, for my amusement, and that amused me much.

The successor of the clerk defunct, for whom I used to write mortuary verses, arrived here this morning, with a recommendatory letter for Joe Rye, and an humble petition of his own, entreating me to assist him as I had assisted his predecessor. I have undertaken the service, although with no little reluctance, being involved in many arrears on other subjects, and having very little dependence at present on my ability to write at all. I proceed exacty as when you were here—a letter now and then before breakfast, and the rest of my time all holiday; if holiday it may be called, that is spent chiefly in moping and musing, and "*forecasting the fashion of uncertain evils.*"

The fever on my spirits has harassed me much, and I have never had so good a night, nor so quiet a rising, since you went, as on this very morning. A relief that I account particularly seasonable and propitious, because I had, in my intentions, devoted this morning to you, and could not have fulfilled those intentions, had I been as spiritless as I generally am.

I am glad that Johnson is in no haste for Milton, for I seem myself not likely to address myself presently to that concern, with any prospect of success; yet something now and then, like a secret whisper, assures and encourages me that it will yet be done. W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY ESQ.

Weston, Nov. 25, 1792.

How shall I thank you enough for the interest you take in my future Miltonic labours, and the assistance you promised me in the performance of them? I will some time or other, if I live, and live a poet, acknowledge your friendship in some of my best verse; the most suitable return one poet can make to another; in the mean time, I love you, and am sensible of all your kindness. You wish me warm in my work, and I ardently wish the same; but when I shall be so, God only knows. My melancholy, which seemed a little alleviated for a few days, has gathered about me again, with as black a cloud as ever; the consequence is absolute incapacity to begin.

I was for some years dirge writer to the town of Northampton, being employed by the clerk of the principal parish there, to furnish him with an annual copy of verses proper to be printed at the foot of his bill of mortality; but the clerk died, and hearing nothing for two years from his successor, I well hoped that I was out of my office. The other morning however Sam announced the new clerk; he came to solicit the same service as I had rendered his predecessor, and I reluctantly complied; doubtful, indeed, whether I was capable. I have however achieved that labour, and I hope nothing more. I am just sent for up to Mary, dear Mary! Adieu! she is as well as when I left you, I would I could say better. Remember us both affectionately to your sweet boy, and trust me for being Most truly yours, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR SIR, *Weston, Dec.* 16, 1792.

We differ so little, that it is pity we should not agree. The possibility of restoring our diseased government is, I think, the only point on which we are not of one mind. If you are right, and it can not be touched in the medical way, without danger of absolute ruin to the constitution, keep the doctors at a distance, say I—and let us live as long as we can. But perhaps physicians might be found of skill sufficient for the purpose, were they but as willing as able. Who are they? Not those honest blunderers the mob, but our governors themselves. As it is in the power of any individual to be honest if he will, any body of men are, as it seems to me, equally possessed of the same option. For I can never persuade myself to think the world so constituted by the author of it, and human society, which is his ordinance, so shabby a business, that the buying and selling of votes and consciences should be essential to its existence. As to multiplied representation, I know not that I foresee any great advantage likely to arise from that. Provided there be but a reasonable number of reasonable heads laid together for the good of the nation, the end may as well be answered by five hundred, as it would be by a thousand, and perhaps better. But then they should be honest as well as wise; and in order that they may be so, they should put it out of their own power to be otherwise. This they might certainly do, if they would; and would they do it, I am not convinced that any great mischief would ensue. You say, "somebody must have influence," but I see no necessity for it. Let integrity of intention and a due share of ability be supposed, and the influence will be in the right place, it will all centre in the zeal and good of the nation. That will influence their debates and decisions, and nothing else ought to do it. You will say perhaps that, wise men and honest men as they are supposed, they are yet liable to be split into almost as many differences of opinion as there are individuals: but I rather think not. It is observed of Prince Eugene and the Duke of Marlborough, that each always approved and seconded the plans and views of the other: and the reason given for it is, that they

were men of equal ability. The same cause that could make two unanimous, would make twenty so; and would at least secure a majority among as many hundreds. As to the reformation of the church, I want none, unless by a better provision for the inferior clergy; and if that could be brought about by emaciating a little some of our too corpulent dignitaries, I should be well contented.

The dissenters, I think, catholics and others, have all a right to the privileges of all other Englishmen, because to deprive them is persecution; and persecution on any account, but especially on a religious one, is an abomination. But after all, *valeat respublica.* I love my country, I love my king, and I wish peace and prosperity to Old England. Adieu. W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, Dec. 26, 1792.

That I may not be silent till my silence alarms you, I snatch a moment to tell you that although *toujours triste* I am not worse than usual, but my opportunities of writing are *paucified*, as perhaps Dr. Johnson would have dared to say, and the few that I have are shortened by company.

Give my love to dear Tom, and thank him for his very apposite extract, which I should be happy indeed to turn to any account. How often do I wish, in the course of every day, that I could be employed once more in poetry, and how often of course that this Miltonic trap had never caught me! The year ninety-two shall stand chronicled in my remembrance as the most melancholy that I have ever known, except the few weeks that I spent at Eartham; and such it has been principally, because being engaged to Milton, I felt myself no longer free for any other engagement. That ill-fated work, impracticable in itself, has made every thing else impracticable.

* * * I am very Pindaric, and obliged to be so by the hurry of the hour. My friends are come down to breakfast. Adieu. W. C.

TO THE REV. MR. HURDIS.

My dear sir, *Weston, Jan.* 6, 1793.

I seize a passing moment merely to say that I feel for your distresses, and sincerely pity you; and I shall be happy to learn from your next, that your sister's amendment has superseded the necessity you feared of a journey to London. Your candid account of the effect that your afflictions have both on your spirits and temper I can perfectly understand, having laboured much in that fire myself, and perhaps more than any man. It is in such a school, however, that we must learn, if we ever truly learn it, the natural depravity of the human heart, and of our own in particular, together with the consequence that necessarily follows such wretched premises; our indispensable need of the atonement, and our inexpressible obligations to him who made it. This reflection can not escape a thinking mind, looking back on those ebullitions of fretfulness and impatience, to which it has yielded in a season of great affliction.

Having lately had company who left us only on the fourth, I have done nothing indeed, since my return from Sussex, except a trifle or two, which it was incumbent upon me to write. Milton hangs in doubt, neither spirits nor opportunity suffice me for that labour. I regret continually that I ever suffered myself to be persuaded to undertake it. The most that I hope to effect is a complete revisal of my own Homer. Johnson told my friend, who has just left me, that it will begin to be reviewed in the next Analytical, and that he *hoped* the review of it would not offend me. By this I understand that if I am not offended, it will be owing more to my own equanimity, than to the mildness of the critic. So be it! He will put an opportunity of victory over myself into my hands, and I will endeavour not to lose it! Adieu. W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

My dear brother, *Weston, Jan.* 20, 1793.

Now I know that you are safe, I treat you, as you see, with a philosophical indifference, not acknowledging your kind and immediate answer to anxious inquiries, till it suits my own convenience. I have learned, however, from my late solicitude, that not only you, but yours, interest me to a degree, that, should any thing happen to either of you, would be very inconsistent with my peace. Sometimes I thought that you were extremely ill, and once or twice that you were dead. As often some tragedy reached my ear concerning little Tom. "*O, vanæ mentes hominum!*" How liable are we to a thousand impositions, and how indebted to honest old Time, who never fails to undeceive us! Whatever you had in prospect you acted kindly by me not to make me partaker of your expectations, for I have a spirit, if not so sanguine as yours, yet that would have waited for your coming with anxious impatience, and have been dismally mortified by the disappointment. Had you come, and come without notice too, you would not have surprised us more, than (as the matter was managed) we were surprised at the arrival of your picture. It reached us in the evening, after the shutters were closed, at a time when a chaise might actually have brought you without giving us the

least previous intimation. Then it was, that Samuel, with his cheerful countenance, appeared at the study door, and with a voice as cheerful as his looks, exclaimed, "Mr. Hayley is come, Madam!" We both started, and in the same moment cried, "Mr. Hayley come! and where is he?" The next moment corrected our mistake, and finding Mary's voice grow suddenly tremulous, I turned and saw her weeping.

I do nothing, notwithstanding all your exhortations: my idleness is a proof against them all, or to speak more truly, my difficulties are so. Something indeed I do. I play at pushpin with Homer every morning before breakfast, fingering and polishing, as Paris did his armour. I have lately had a letter from Dublin on that subject, which has pleased me. W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

MY DEAREST HAYLEY, *Weston, Jan.* 29, 1793.

I TRULY sympathize with you under your weight of sorrow for the loss of our good Samaritan. But be not broken-hearted, my friend! Remember, the loss of those we love is the condition on which we live ourselves; and that he who chooses his friends wisely from among the excellent of the earth, has a sure ground to hope concerning them when they die, that a merciful God has made them far happier than they could be here, and that we shall join them soon again. This is solid comfort, could we but avail ourselves of it; but I confess the difficulty of doing so. Sorrow is like the deaf adder, "that hears not the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely;" and I feel so much myself for the death of Austin, that my own chief consolation is, that I had never seen him. Live yourself, I beseech you, for I have seen so much of you, that I can by no means spare you, and will live as long as it shall please God to permit. I know you set some value on me, therefore let that promise comfort you, and give us not reason to say, like David's servant, "We know that it would have pleased thee more if all we had died, than this one, for whom thou art inconsolable." You have still Romney and Carwardine, and Guy, and me, my poor Mary, and I know not how many beside; as many, I suppose, as ever had an opportunity of spending a day with you. He who has the most friends must necessarily lose the most, and he whose friends are numerous as yours may the better spare a part of them. It is a changing transient scene: yet a little while, and this poor dream of life will be over with all of us—The living, and they who live unhappy, they are indeed subjects of sorrow. Adieu, my beloved friend,

Ever yours, W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

Weston, Feb. 5, 1793.

IN this last revisal of my work (the Homer) I have made a number of small improvements, and am now more convinced than ever, having exercised a cooler judgment upon it than before I could, that the translation will make its way. There must be time for the conquest of vehement and long rooted prejudice; but without much self-partiality, I believe that the conquest will be made: and am certain that I should be of the same opinion, were the work another man's. I shall soon have finished the Odyssey, and when I have, will send the corrected copy of both to Johnson. Adieu.

W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Feb. 10, 1793.

My pens are all split, and my inkglass is dry;
Neither wit, common sense, nor ideas have I.

IN vain has it been that I have made several attempts to write since I came from Sussex; unless more comfortable days arrive than I have the confidence to look for, there is an end of all writing with me. I have no spirits: when the Rose came, I was obliged to prepare for his coming by a nightly dose of laudanum—twelve drops suffice; but without them I am devoured by melancholy.

A-propos of the Rose! His wife in her political notions is the exact counterpart of yourself—loyal in the extreme. Therefore, if you find her thus inclined, when you become acquainted with her you must not place her resemblance of yourself to the account of her admiration of you, for she is your likeness ready made. In fact, we are all of one mind, about government matters, and notwithstanding your opinion, the Rose is himself a Whig, and I am a Whig, and you, my dear, are a Tory, and all the Tories now-a-days call all the Whigs Republicans. How the deuce you came to be a Tory is best known to yourself; you have to answer for this novelty to the shades of your ancestors, who were always Whigs ever since we had any. Adieu. W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Feb.* 17, 1793.

I HAVE read the critique of my work in the Analytical Review, and am happy to have fallen into the hands of a critic, rigorous enough indeed, but a scholar and a man of sense, and who does not deliberately intend me mischief I am bette

pleased indeed that he censures some things, than I should have been with unmixed commendation, for his censure will (to use the new diplomatic term) accredit his praises. In his particular remarks he is for the most part right, and I shall be the better for them; but in his general ones I think he asserts too largely, and more than he could prove. With respect to inversions in particular, I know that they do not abound. Once they did, and I had Milton's example for it, not disapproved by Addison. But on ———'s remonstrance against them, I expunged the most, and in my new edition shall have fewer still. I know that they give dignity, and am sorry to part with them, but, to parody an old proverb, he who lives in the year ninety-three, must do as in the year ninety-three is done by others. The same remark I have to make on his censure of inharmonious lines. I know them to be much fewer than he asserts, and not more in number than I accounted indispensably necessary to a due variation of cadence. I have, however, now in conformity with modern taste, (overmuch delicate in my mind) given to a far greater number of them a flow as smooth as oil. A few I retain, and will, in compliment to my own judgment. He thinks me too faithful to compound epithets in the introductory lines, and I know his reason. He fears, lest the English reader should blame Homer, whom he idolizes, though hardly more than I, for such constant repetition. But them I shall not alter. They are necessary to a just representation of the original. In the affair of Outis, I shall throw him flat on his back by an unanswerable argument, which I shall give in a note, and with which I am furnished by Mrs. Unwin. So much for hypercriticism, which has run away with all my paper. This critic by the way is ——, I know him by infallible indications. W. C.

TO THE REV. MR. HURDIS.

MY DEAR SIR, *Weston, Feb.* 23, 1793.

My eyes, which have long been inflamed, will hardly serve me for Homer, and oblige me to make all my letters short. You have obliged me much by sending me so speedily the remainder of your notes. I have begun with them again, and find them, as before, very much to the purpose. More to the purpose they could not have been, had you been poetry professor already. I rejoice sincerely in the prospect you have of that office, which, whatever may be your own thoughts of the matter, I am sure you will fill with great sufficiency. Would that my interest and power to serve you were greater! One string to my bow I have, and one only, which shall not be idle for want of my exertions. I thank you likewise for your very entertaining notices and remarks in the natural way. The hurry in which I write would not suffer me to send you many in return, had I many to send, but only two or three present themselves.

Frogs will feed on worms. I saw a frog gathering into his gullet an earth-worm as long as himself; it cost him time and labour, but at last he succeeded.

Mrs. Unwin and I, crossing a brook, saw from the foot-bridge somewhat at the bottom of the water which had the appearance of a flower. Observing it attentively, we found that it consisted of a circular assemblage of minnows; their heads all met in a centre; and their tails diverging at equal distances, and being elevated above their heads, gave them the appearance of a flower half blown. One was longer than the rest; and as often as a straggler came in sight, he quitted his place to pursue him, and having driven him away, he returned to it again, no other minnow offering to take it in his absence. This we saw him do several times. The object that had attached them all was a dead minnow, which they seemed to be devouring.

After a very rainy day, I saw on one of the flower borders what seemed a long hair, but it had a waving, twining motion. Considering more nearly, I found it alive, and endued with spontaneity, but could not discover at the ends of it either head or tail, or any distinction of parts. I carried it into the house, when the air of a warm room dried and killed it presently. W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Feb. 24, 1793.

Your letter (so full of kindness, and so exactly in unison with my own feelings for you) should have had, as it deserved to have, an earlier answer, had I not been perpetually tormented with inflamed eyes, which are a sad hindrance to me in every thing. But to make amends, if I do not send you an early answer, I send you at least a speedy one, being obliged to write as fast as my pen can trot, that I may shorten the time of poring upon paper as much as possible. Homer too has been another hindrance, for always when I can see, which is only about two hours every morning, and not at all by candlelight, I devote myself to him, being in haste to send him a second time to the press, that nothing may stand in the way of Milton. By the way, where are my dear Tom's remarks, which I long to have, and must have soon, or they will come too late?

Oh! you rogue! what would you give to have such a dream about Milton, as I had about a week since? I dreamed that being in a house in the city, and with much company, looking towards the

lower end of the room from the upper end of it, I descried a figure which I immediately knew to be Milton's. He was very gravely, but very neatly attired in the fashion of his day, and had a countenance which filled me with those feelings that an affectionate child has for a beloved father, such, for instance, as Tom has for you. My first thought was wonder, where he could have been concealed so many years; my second, a transport of joy to find him still alive; my third, another transport to find myself in his company; and my fourth, a resolution to accost him. I did so, and he received me with a complacence, in which I saw equal sweetness and dignity. I spoke of his Paradise Lost, as every man must, who is worthy to speak of it at all, and told him a long story of the manner in which it affected me, when I first discovered it, being at that time a schoolboy. He answered me by a smile, and a gentle inclination of his head. He then grasped my hand affectionately, and with a smile that charmed me, said, "Well, you for your part will do well also;" at last recollecting his great age (for I understood him to be two hundred years old) I feared that I might fatigue him by much talking, I took my leave, and he took his, with an air of the most perfect good-breeding. His person, his features, his manner, were all so perfectly characteristic, that I am persuaded an apparition of him could not represent him more completely. This may be said to have been one of the dreams of Pindus, may it not?

How truly I rejoice that you have recovered Guy; that man won my heart the moment I saw him; give my love to him, and tell him I am truly glad he is alive again.

There is much sweetness in those lines from the sonneteer of Avon, and not a little in dear Tom's, an earnest, I trust, of good things to come.

With Mary's kind love, I must now conclude myself,

My dear brother, ever yours, LIPPUS.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Weston, March* 4, 1793.

SINCE I received your last I have been much indisposed, very blind, and very busy. But I have not suffered all these evils at one and the same time. While the winter lasted I was miserable with a fever on my spirits; when the spring began to approach I was seized with an inflammation in my eyes; and ever since I have been able to use them, have been employed in giving more last touches to Homer, who is on the point of going to the press again.

Though you are Tory, I believe, and I am Whig, our sentiments concerning the madcaps of France are much the same. They are a terrible race, and I have a horror both of them and their principles. Tacitus is certainly living now, and the quotations you sent me can be nothing but extracts from some letter of his to yourself.

Yours sincerely, W. C.

TO MR. THOMAS HAYLEY.

Weston, March 14, 1793.

MY DEAR LITTLE CRITIC,

I THANK you heartily for your observations, on which I set an higher value, because they have instructed me as much, and have entertained me more than all the other strictures of our public judges in these matters. Perhaps I am not much more pleased with *shameless wolf*, &c. than you. But what is to be done, my little man? Coarse as the expressions are, they are no more than equivalent to those of Homer. The invective of the ancients was never tempered with good manners, as your papa can tell you: and my business, you know, is, not to be more polite than my author, but to represent him as closely as I can.

Dishonour'd foul I have wiped away for the reason you give, which is a very just one, and the present reading is this,

> Who had dar'd dishonour thus
> The life itself, &c.

Your objection to *kindler of the fires of Heaven* I had the good fortune to anticipate, and expunged the dirty ambiguity some time since, wondering not a little that I had ever admitted it.

The fault you find with the two first verses of Nestor's speech discovers such a degree of just discernment, that but for your papa's assurance to the contrary, I must have suspected *him* as the author of that remark: much as I should have respected it, if it had been so, I value it, I assure you, my little friend, still more as yours. In the new edition the passage will be found thus altered:

> Alas! great sorrow falls on Greece to-day,
> Priam, and Priam's sons, with all in Troy—
> Oh! how will they exult, and in their hearts
> Triumph, once hearing of this broil between
> The prime of Greece, in council, and in arms.

Where the word *reel* suggests to you the idea of a drunken mountain, it performs the service to which I destined it. It is a bold metaphor; but justified by one of the sublimest passages in scripture, compared with the sublimity of which even that of Homer suffers humiliation.

It is God himself, who, speaking, I think, by the prophet Isaiah, says,

"The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard." With equal boldness, in the same scripture, the poetry of which was never equalled, mountains are said to skip, to break out into singing, and the

fields to clap their hands. I intend, therefore, that my Olympus shall be still tipsy.

The accuracy of your last remark, in which you convicted me of a bull, delights me. A fig for all critics but you! The blockheads could not find it. It shall stand thus,

First spake Polydamas—

Homer was more upon his guard than to commit such a blunder, for he says,

ἦρχ' ἀγορεύειν.

And now, my dear little censor, once more accept my thanks. I only regret that your strictures are so few, being just and sensible as they are.

Tell your papa that he shall hear from me soon; accept mine, and my dear invalid's affectionate remembrances. Ever yours. W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

MY DEAR HAYLEY, *Weston, March* 19, 1793.

I AM so busy every morning before breakfast (my only opportunity), strutting and stalking in Homeric stilts, that you ought to account it an instance of marvellous grace and favour, that I condescend to write even to you. Sometimes I am seriously almost crazed with the multiplicity of the matters before me, and the little or no time that I have for them; and sometimes I repose myself after the fatigue of that distraction on the pillow of despair; a pillow which has often served me in time of need, and is become, by frequent use, if not very comfortable, at least convenient! So reposed, I laugh at the world, and say, "Yes, you may gape and expect both Homer and Milton from me, but I'll be hanged if ever you get them."

In Homer you must know I am advanced as far as the fifteenth book of the Iliad, leaving nothing behind me that can reasonably offend the most fastidious: and I design him for public appearance in his new dress as soon as possible, for a reason which any poet may guess, if he will but thrust his hand into his pocket.

You forbid me to tantalize you with an invitation to Weston, and yet invite me to Eartham!—No! no! there is no such happiness in store for me at present. Had I rambled at all, I was under promise to all my dear mother's kindred to go to Norfolk, and they are dying to see me; but I have told them, that die they must, for I can not go; and ergo, as you will perceive, can go nowhere else.

Thanks for Mazarine's epitaph! it is full of witty parodox, and is written with a force and severity which sufficiently bespeak the author. I account it an inestimable curiosity, and shall be happy when time shall serve, with your aid, to make a good translation of it. But that will be a stubborn business. Adieu! The clock strikes eight, and now for Homer. W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Weston, March* 27, 1793.

I MUST send you a line of congratulation on the event of your transaction with Johnson, since you I know partake with me in the pleasure I receive from it. Few of my concerns have been so happily concluded. I am now satisfied with my bookseller, as I have substantial cause to be, and account myself in good hands; a circumstance as pleasant to me as any other part of my business; for I love dearly to be able to confide with all my heart in those with whom I am connected, of what kind soever the connexion may be.

The question of printing or not printing the alterations, seems difficult to decide. If they are not printed, I shall perhaps disoblige some purchasers of the first edition; and if they are, many others of them, perhaps a great majority, will never care about them. As far as I have gone I have made a fair copy, and when I have finished the whole, will send them to Johnson, together with the interleaved volumes. He will see in a few minutes what it will be best to do, and by his judgment I shall be determined. The opinion to which I most incline is, that they ought to be printed separately, for they are many of them rather long, here and there a whole speech, or a whole simile, and the verbal and lineal variations are so numerous, that altogether, I apprehend, they will give a new air to the work, and I hope a much improved one.

I forgot to say in the proper place that some notes, although but very few, I have added already, and may perhaps see here and there opportunity for a few more. But notes being little wanted, especially by people at all conversant with classical literature, as most readers of Homer are, I am persuaded that, were they numerous, they would be deemed an incumbrance. I shall write to Johnson soon, perhaps to-morrow, and then shall say the same thing to him.

In point of health we continue much the same. Our united love, and many thanks for your prosperous negotiations, attend yourself and whole family, and especially my little namesake. Adieu.

W. C

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

The Lodge, April 11, 1793.

MY DEAREST JOHNNY,

THE long muster-roll of my great and small ancestors I signed, and dated, and sent up to Mr. Blue-mantle, on Monday, according to your desire.

Such a pompous affair, drawn out for my sake, reminds me of the old fable of the mountain in parturition, and a mouse the produce. Rest undisturbed, say I, their lordly, ducal, and royal dust! Had they left me something handsome, I should have respected them more. But perhaps they did not know that such a one as I should have the honour to be numbered among their descendants. Well! I have a little bookseller that makes me some amends for their deficiency. He has made me a present; an act of liberality which I take every opportunity to blazon, as it well deserves. But you I suppose have learned it already from Mr. Rose.

Fear not, my man. You will acquit yourself very well I dare say, both in standing for your degree, and when you have gained it. A little tremor, and a little shamefacedness in a stripling, like you, are recommendations rather than otherwise; and so they ought to be, being symptoms of an ingenuous mind rather unfrequent in this age of brass.

What you say of your determined purpose, with God's help, to take up the cross, and despise the shame, gives us both real pleasure. In our pedigree is found one at least who did it before you. Do you the like: and you will meet him in Heaven, as sure as the Scripture is the word of God.

The quarrel that the world has with evangelic men and doctrines, they would have with a host of angels in the human form. For it is the quarrel of owls with sunshine; of ignorance with divine illumination.

Adieu, my dear Johnny! We shall expect you with earnest desire of your coming, and receive you with much delight. W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, April 23, 1793.

MY DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER,

Better late than never, and better a little than none at all! Had I been at liberty to consult my inclinations, I would have answered your truly kind and affectionate letter immediately. But I am the busiest man alive; and when this epistle is despatched, you will be the only one of my correspondents to whom I shall not be indebted. While I write this, my poor Mary sits mute; which I can not well bear, and which, together with want of time to write much, will have a curtailing effect on my epistle.

My only studying time is still given to Homer, not to correction and amendment of him (for that is all over) but to writing notes. Johnson has expressed a wish for some, that the unlearned may be a little illuminated concerning classical story and the mythology of the ancients; and his behaviour to me has been so liberal, that I can refuse him nothing. Poking into the old Greek commentators blinds me. But it is no matter. I am the more like Homer.

Ever yours, my dearest Hayley, W. C.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Weston, May* 4, 1793.

While your sorrow for our common loss was fresh in your mind, I would not write, lest a letter on so distressing a subject should be too painful both to you and me; and now that I seem to have reached a proper time for doing it, the multiplicity of my literary business will hardly afford me leisure. Both you and I have this comfort when deprived of those we love—at our time of life we have every reason to believe that the deprivation can not be long. Our sun is setting too; and when the hour of rest arrives we shall rejoin your brother, and many whom we have tenderly loved, our forerunners into a better country.

I will say no more on a theme which it will be better perhaps to treat with brevity; and because the introduction of any other might seem a transition too violent, I will only add that Mrs. Unwin and I are about as well as we at any time have been within the last year. Truly yours. W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *May* 5, 1793.

My delay to answer your last kind letter, to which likewise you desired a speedy reply, must have seemed rather difficult to explain on any other supposition than that of illness; but illness has not been the cause, although to say the truth I can not boast of having been lately very well. Yet has not this been the cause of my silence, but your own advice, very proper and earnestly given to me, to proceed in the revisal of Homer. To this it is owing that instead of giving an hour or two before breakfast to my correspondence, I allot that time entirely to my studies. I have nearly given the last touches to the poetry, and am now busied far more laboriously in writing notes at the request of my honest bookseller, transmitted to me in the first instance by you, and afterwards repeated by himself. I am therefore deep in the old Scholia, and have advanced to the latter part of Iliad nine, explaining, as I go, such passages as may be difficult to unlearned readers, and such only; for notes of that kind are the notes that Johnson desired. I find it a more laborious task than the translation was, and shall be heartily glad when it is over. In the mean time all the letters I receive remain unanswered, or if they receive an answer, it is al-

ways a short one. Such this must be. Johnny is here, having flown over London.

Homer I believe will make a much more respectable appearance than before. Johnson now thinks it will be right to make a separate impression of the amendments.

W. C.

I breakfast every morning on seven or eight pages of the Greek commentators. For so much I am obliged to read, in order to select perhaps three or four short notes for the readers of my translation.

Homer is indeed a tie upon me that must not on any account be broken, till all his demands are satisfied; though I have fancied while the revisal of the Odyssey was at a distance, that it would ask less labour in the finishing, it is not unlikely that, when I take it actually in hand, I may find myself mistaken. Of this at least I am sure, that uneven verse abounds much more in it than it once did in the Iliad, yet to the latter the critics objected on that account, though to the former never; perhaps because they had not read it. Hereafter they shall not quarrel with me on that score. The Iliad is now all smooth turnpike, and I will take equal care that there shall be no jolts in the Odyssey.

TO LADY HESKETH.

My dearest coz, *The Lodge, May* 7, 1793.

You have thought me long silent, and so have many others. In fact I have not for many months written punctually to any but yourself, and Hayley. My time, the little I have, is so engrossed by Homer, that I have at this moment a bundle of unanswered letters by me, and letters likely to be so. Thou knowest, I dare say, what it is to have a head weary with thinking. Mine is so fatigued by breakfast time, three days out of four, I am utterly incapable of sitting down to my desk again for any purpose whatever.

I am glad I have convinced thee at least, that thou art a Tory. Your friend's definition of Whig and Tory may be just for aught I know, as far as the latter are concerned; but respecting the former, I think him mistaken. There is no true Whig who wishes all power in the hands of his own party. The division of it which the lawyers call tripartite, is exactly what he desires; and he would have neither kings, lords, nor commons unequally trusted, or in the smallest degree predominant. Such a Whig am I, and such Whigs are the true friends of the constitution.

Adieu! my dear, I am dead with weariness.

W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

My dear brother, *Weston, May* 21, 1793.

You must either think me extremely idle, or extremely busy, that I have made your last very kind letter wait so very long for an answer. The truth however is, that I am neither; but have had time enough to have scribbled to you, had I been able to scribble at all. To explain this riddle I must give you a short account of my proceedings

I rise at six every morning, and fag till near eleven, when I breakfast. The consequence is, that I am so exhausted as not to be able to write when the opportunity offers. You will say—"breakfast before you work, and then your work will not fatigue you." I answer—"perhaps I might, and your counsel would probably prove beneficial; but I can not spare a moment for eating in the early part of the morning, having no other time for study." This uneasiness of which I complain is a proof that I am somewhat stricken in years; and there is no other cause by which I can account for it, since I go early to bed, always between ten and eleven, and seldom fail to sleep well. Certain it is, ten years ago I could have done as much, and sixteen years ago did actually much more, without suffering fatigue, or any inconvenience from my labours. How insensibly old age steals on, and how often is it actually arrived before we suspect it! Accident alone; some occurrence that suggests a comparison of our former with our present selves, affords the discovery. Well! it is always good to be undeceived especially on an article of such importance.

There has been a book lately published, entitled, *Man as he is*. I have heard a high character of it, as admirably written, and am informed that for that reason, and because it inculcates Whig principles, it is by many imputed to you. I contradicted this report, assuring my informant that had it been yours, I must have known it, for that you have bound yourself to make me your father confessor on all such wicked occasions, and not to conceal from me even a murder, should you happen to commit one.

I will not trouble you, at present, to send me any more books with a view to my notes on Homer. I am not without hopes that Sir John Throckmorton, who is expected here from Venice in a short time, may bring me Villoison's edition of the Odyssey. He certainly will, if he found it published, and that alone will be *instar omnium*.

Adieu, my dearest brother! Give my love to Tom, and thank him for his book, of which I believe I need not have deprived him, intending that my readers shall detect the occult instruction contained in Homer's stories for themselves.

W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

MY DEAREST COUSIN, *Weston, June* 1, 1793.

You will not, (you say) come to us now; and you tell us not when you will. These assignations *sine die* are such shadowy things, that I can neither grasp nor get any comfort from them. Know you not, that hope is the next best thing to enjoyment? Give us then a hope, and a determinate time for that hope to fix on, and we will endeavour to be satisfied.

Johnny is gone to Cambridge, called thither to take his degree, and is much missed by me. He is such an active little fellow in my service, that he can not be otherwise. In three weeks however I shall hope to have him again for a fortnight. I have had a letter from him containing an incident which has given birth to the following.*

These are spick and span. Johnny himself has not yet seen them. By the way, he has filled your book completely; and I will give thee a guinea if thou wilt search thy old book for a couple of songs, and two or three other pieces of which I know thou madest copies at the vicarage, and which I have lost. The songs I know are pretty good, and I would fain recover them.

W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.†

Weston, June 29, 1793.

What remains for me to say on this subject, my dear brother bard, I will say in prose. There are other impediments which I could not comprise within the bounds of a sonnet.

My poor Mary's infirm condition makes it impossible for me, at present, to engage in a work such as you propose. My thoughts are not sufficiently free, nor have I, nor can I, by any means, find opportunity; added to which, comes a difficulty, which, though you are not at all aware of it, presents itself to me under a most forbidding appearance: Can you guess it? No, not you: neither perhaps will you be able to imagine that such a difficulty can possibly subsist. If your hair begins to bristle, stroke it down again, for there is no need why it should erect itself. It concerns me, not you. I know myself too well not to know that I am nobody in verse, unless in a corner, and alone, and unconnected in my operations. This is not owing to want of love for you, my brother, or the most consummate confidence in you; for I have both in a degree that has not been exceeded in the experience of any friend you have, or ever had. But I am so made up;—I will not enter into a metaphysical analysis of my strange composition, in order to detect the true cause of this evil; but on a general view of the matter, I suspect that it proceeds from that shyness, which has been my effectual and almost fatal hindrance on many other important occasions; and which I should feel, I well know, on this, to a degree that would perfectly cripple me. No! I shall neither do, nor attempt any thing of consequence more, unless my poor Mary get better; nor even then, unless it should please God to give me another nature, in concert with any man —I could not even with my own father or brother, were they now alive. Small game must serve me at present, and till I have done with Homer and Milton, a sonnet or some such matter must content me. The utmost that I aspire to, and Heaven knows with how feeble a hope, is to write at some better opportunity, and when my hands are free, *The Four Ages*. Thus I have opened my heart unto thee.

W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

MY DEAREST HAYLEY, *Weston, July* 7, 1793.

If the excessive heat of this day, which forbids me to do any thing else, will permit me to scribble to you, I shall rejoice. To do this is a pleasure to me at all times, but to do it now, a double one; because I am in haste to tell you how much I am delighted with your projected quadruple alliance, and to assure you that if it please God to afford me health, spirits, ability and leisure, I will not fail to devote them all to the production of my quota, *The Four Ages*.

You are very kind to humour me as you do, and had need be a little touched yourself with all my oddities, that you may know how to administer to mine. All whom I love do so, and I believe it to be impossible to love heartily those who do not. People must not do me good in *their* way, but in my *own*, and then they do me good indeed. My pride, my ambition, and my friendship, for you, and the interest I take in my own dear self, will all be consulted and gratified by an arm-in-arm appearance with you in public: and I shall work with more zeal and assiduity at Homer, and, when Homer is finished, at Milton, with the prospect of such a coalition before me. But what shall I do with a multitude of small pieces, from which I intended to select the best, and adding them to *The Four Ages*, to have made a volume? Will there be room for them upon your plan? I have retouched them, and will retouch them again. Some of them will suggest pretty devices

* Verses to a Young Friend, &c. See Poems.

† This Letter commenced with the Lines to William Hayley, Esq. beginning, "Dear architect of fine chateaux in air." See Poems.

to a designer, and in short I have a desire not to lose them.

I am at this moment, with all the imprudence natural to poets, expending nobody knows what, in embellishing my premises, or rather the premises of my neighbour Courtenay, which is more poetical still. I have built one summer-house already, with the boards of my old study, and am building another spick and span as they say. I have also a stone-cutter now at work, setting a bust of my dear old Grecian on a pedestal; and besides all this, I meditate still more that is to be done in the autumn. Your project therefore is most opportune, as any project must needs be that has so direct a tendency to put money into the pocket of one so likely to want it.

> Ah brother poet! send me of your shade,
> And bid the Zephyrs hasten to my aid!
> Or, like a worm unearth'd at noon, I go,
> Despatch'd by sunshine, to the shades below.

My poor Mary is as well as the heat will allow her to be, and whether it be cold or sultry, is always affectionately mindful of you and yours.

W. C.

TO THE REV. MR. GREATHEED.

July 23, 1793.

I was not without some expectation of a line from you, my dear sir, though you did not promise me one at your departure; and am happy not to have been disappointed; still happier to learn that you and Mrs. Greatheed are well, and so delightfully situated. Your kind offer to us of sharing with you the house which you at present inhabit, added to the short but lively description of the scenery that surrounds it, wants nothing to win our acceptance, should it please God to give Mrs. Unwin a little more strength, and should I ever be master of my time so as to be able to gratify myself with what would please me most. But many have claims upon us, and some who can not absolutely be said to have any, would yet complain, and think themselves slighted, should we prefer rocks and caves to them. In short we are called so many ways, that these numerous demands are likely to operate as a *remora*, and to keep us fixt at home. Here we can occasionally have the pleasure of yours and Mrs. Greatheed's company, and to have it here must I believe content us. Hayley in his last letter gives me reason to expect the pleasure of seeing him and his dear boy Tom, in the autumn. He will use all his eloquence to draw us to Eartham again. My cousin Johnny of Norfolk holds me under a promise to make my first trip thither, and the very same promise I have hastily made to visit Sir John and Lady Throckmorton, at Bucklands. How to reconcile such clashing promises, and give satisfaction to all, would puzzle me, had I nothing else to do; and therefore, as I say, the result will probably be, that we shall find ourselves obliged to go no where, since we can not every where.

* * * * *

Wishing you both safe at home again, and to see you, as soon as may be, here,

I remain, affectionately yours, W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, July 24, 1793.

I have been vexed with myself, my dearest brother, and with every thing about me, not excepting even Homer himself, that I have been obliged so long to delay an answer to your last kind letter. If I listen any longer to calls another way, I shall hardly be able to tell you how happy we are in the hope of seeing you in the autumn, before the autumn will have arrived. Thrice welcome will you and your dear boy be to us, and the longer you will afford us your company, the more welcome. I have set up the head of Homer on a famous fine pedestal, and a very majestic appearance he makes. I am now puzzled about a motto, and wish you to decide for me between two, one of which I have composed myself, a Greek one as follows:

Εικονα τις ταυτην; κλυτον ανερος ωνομ' ολωλεν.
Ουνομα δ' αυτος ανηρ αφθιτον αιεν εχει.

The other is my own translation of a passage in the Odyssey, the original of which I have seen used as a motto to an engraved head of Homer many a time.

The present edition of the lines stands thus:

> Him partially the muse,
> And dearly loved, yet gave him good and ill:
> She quench'd his sight, but gave him strains divine.

Tell me by the way (if you ever had any speculations on the subject) what is it you suppose Homer to have meant in particular, when he ascribed his blindness to the muse; for that he speaks of himself under the name Demodocus in the eighth book, I believe is by all admitted. How could the old bard study himself blind, when books are either few, or none at all? And did he write his poems? If neither were the cause, as seems reasonable to imagine, how could he incur his blindness by such means as could be justly imputable to the muse? Would mere thinking blind him? I want to know:

> "Call up some spirit from the vasty deep!"

I said to my Sam*—"Sam, build me a shed in the garden, with any thing that you can find, and make it rude and rough, like one of those at Eartham."—"Yes, sir," says Sam, and straightway laying his own noddle, and the carpenter's noddle together, has built me a thing fit for Stow Gardens. Is not this vexatious?—I threaten to inscribe it thus;

Beware of building! I intended
Rough logs and thatch, and thus it ended.

But my Mary says I shall break Sam's heart, and the carpenter's too, and will not consent to it. Poor Mary sleeps but ill. How have you lived who can not bear a sunbeam?

Adieu! my dearest Hayley. W. C.

TO MRS. CHARLOTTE SMITH.

MY DEAR MADAM, *Weston, July* 25, 1793.

Many reasons concurred to make me impatient for the arrival of your most acceptable present, and among them was the fear lest you should perhaps suspect me of tardiness in acknowledging so great a favour; a fear that, as often as it prevailed, distressed me exceedingly. At length I have received it, and my little bookseller assures me that he sent it the very day he got it; by some mistake however the wagon brought it instead of the coach, which occasioned a delay that I could ill afford.

It came this morning about an hour ago; consequently I have not had time to peruse the poem, though you may be sure I have found enough for the perusal of the Dedication I have in fact given it three readings, and in each have found increasing pleasure.

I am a whimsical creature; when I write for the public I write of course with a desire to please, in other words to acquire fame, and I labour accordingly; but when I find that I have succeeded, feel myself alarmed, and ready to shrink from the acquisition.

This I have felt more than once, and when I saw my name at the head of your Dedication, I felt it again; but the consummate delicacy of your praise soon convinced me that I might spare my blushes, and that the demand was less upon my modesty than my gratitude. Of that be assured, dear madam, and of the truest esteem and respect of your most obliged and affectionate humble servant, W. C.

P. S. I should have been much grieved to have let slip this opportunity of thanking you for your charming sonnets, and my two most agreeable old friends, Monimia and Orlando.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Weston, Aug. 11, 1793.

MY DEAREST COUSIN,

I am glad that my poor and hasty attempts to express some little civility to Miss Fanshaw, and the amiable Count, have your and her approbation. The lines addressed to her were not what I would have them; but lack of time, a lack which always presses me, would not suffer me to improve them. Many thanks for her letter, which, were my merits less the subject of it, I should without scruple say is an excellent one. She writes with the force and accuracy of a person skilled in more languages than are spoken in the present day, as I doubt not that she is. I perfectly approve the theme she recommends to me, but am at present so totally absorbed in Homer, that all I do beside is ill done, being hurried over; and I would not execute ill a subject of her recommending.

I shall watch the walnuts with more attention than those who eat them, which I do in some hope, though you do not expressly say so, that when their threshing time arrives, we shall see you here. I am now going to paper my new study, and in a short time it will be fit to inhabit.

Lady Spencer has sent me a present from Rome, by the hands of Sir John Throckmorton, engravings of Odyssey subjects, after figures by Flaxman, a statuary at present resident there, of high repute, and much a friend of Hayley's.

Thou livest, my dear, I acknowledge, in a very fine country, but they have spoiled it by building London in it. Adieu. W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, Aug 15, 1793.

Instead of a pound or two, spending a mint
Must serve me at least, I believe, with a hint,
That building, and building, a man may be driven
At last out of doors, and have no house to live in.

Besides, my dearest brother, they have not only built for me what I did not want, but have ruined a notable tetrastic by doing so. I had written one which I designed for a hermitage, and it will by no means suit the fine and pompous affair which they have made instead of one. So that as a poet I am every way afflicted; made poorer than I need have been, and robbed of my verses; what case can be more deplorable?

You must not suppose me ignorant of what Flaxman has done, or that I have not seen it, or

* A very affectionate, worthy domestic, who attended his master into Sussex.

that I am not actually in possession of it, at least of the engravings which you mention. In fact, I have had them more than a fortnight. Lady Dowager Spencer, to whom I inscribed my Odyssey, and who was at Rome when Sir John Throckmorton was there, charged him with them as a present to me, and arriving here lately he executed his commission. Romney I doubt not is right in his judgment of them; he is an artist himself, and can not easily be mistaken; and I take his opinion as an oracle, the rather because it coincides exactly with my own. The figures are highly classical, antique, and elegant: especially that of Penelope, who whether she wakes or sleeps must necessarily charm all beholders.

Your scheme of embellishing my Odyssey with these plates is a kind one, and the fruit of your benevolence to me; but Johnson, I fear, will hardly stake so much money as the cost would amount to on a work, the fate of which is at present uncertain. Nor could we adorn the Odyssey in this splendid manner, unless we had similar ornaments to bestow on the Iliad. Such I presume are not ready, and much time must elapse, even if Flaxman should accede to the plan, before he could possibly prepare them. Happy indeed should I be to see a work of mine so nobly accompanied, but should that good fortune ever attend me, it can not take place till the third or fourth edition shall afford the occasion. This I regret, and I regret too that you shall have seen them before I can have an opportunity to show them to you. Here is sixpence for you if you will abstain from the sight of them while you are in London.

> The sculptor? Nameless, though once dear to fame;
> But this man bears an everlasting name.*

So I purpose it shall stand; and on the pedestal, when you come, in that form you will find it. The added line from the Odyssey is charming, but the assumption of sonship to Homer seems too daring; suppose it stood thus,

Ὡς δὲ παις ῳ πατρι, και ωπυτε λησομαι αυτε.

I am not sure that this would be clear of the same objection, and it departs from the text still more.

With my poor Mary's best love and our united wishes to see you here, I remain,

My dearest brother, ever yours, W. C.

TO MRS. COURTENAY.

Weston, Aug. 20, 1793.

My dearest Catharina is too reasonable, I know, to expect news from me, who live on the outside of the world, and know nothing that passes within it. The best news is, that though you are gone, you are not gone for ever, as once I supposed you were, and said that we should probably meet no more. Some news, however, we have; but then I conclude that you have already received it from the Doctor, and that thought almost deprives me of all courage to relate it. On the evening of the feast, Bob Archer's house affording I suppose the best room for the purpose, all the lads and lasses, who felt themselves disposed to dance, assembled there. Long time they danced, at least long time they did something a little like it; when at last the company having retired, the fiddler asked Bob for a lodging. Bob replied—"that his beds were all full of his own family, but if he chose it he would show him a haycock, where he might sleep as sound as in any bed whatever."—So forth they went together, and when they reached the place, the fiddler knocked down Bob, and demanded his money. But happily for Bob, though he might be knocked down, and actually was so, yet he could not possibly be robbed, having nothing. The fiddler therefore having amused himself with kicking him and beating him as he lay, as long as he saw good, left him, and has never been heard of since, nor inquired after indeed, being no doubt the last man in the world whom Bob wishes to see again.

By a letter from Hayley to-day I learn that Flaxman, to whom we are indebted for those Odyssey figures which Lady Frog brought over, has almost finished a set for the Iliad also. I should be glad to embellish my Homer with them, but neither my bookseller nor I shall probably choose to risk so expensive an ornament on a work, whose reception with the public is at present doubtful.

Adieu, my dearest Catharina. Give my best love to your husband. Come home as soon as you can, and accept our united very best wishes.

W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

MY DEAREST FRIEND, *Weston, Aug.* 22, 1793.

I REJOICE that you have had so pleasant an excursion, and have beheld so many beautiful scenes. Except the delightful Upway I have seen them all. I have lived much at Southampton, have slept and caught a sore throat at Lyndhurst, and have swum in the bay of Weymouth. It will give us great pleasure to see you here, should your business give you an opportunity to finish your excursions of this season with one to Weston.

As for my going on, it is much as usual. I rise at six; an industrious and wholesome practice, from which I have never swerved since March. I breakfast generally about eleven—have given all the intermediate time to my old delightful bard Vil-

* A translation of Cowper's Greek verses on his bust of Homer.

loison no longer keeps me company. I therefore now jog along with Clarke and Barnes at my elbow, and from the excellent annotations of the former select such as I think likely to be useful, or that recommend themselves by the amusement they may afford, of which sorts there are not a few Barnes also affords me some of both kinds, but not so many, his notes being chiefly paraphrastical or grammatical. My only fear is lest between them both I should make my work too voluminous. W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston Lodge, Aug. 27, 1793.

I THANK you, my dear brother, for consulting the Gibbonian oracle on the question concerning Homer's muse, and his blindness. I proposed it likewise to my little neighbour Buchanan, who gave me precisely the same answer. I felt an insatiable thirst to learn something new concerning him, and despairing of information from others, was willing to hope that I had stumbled on matter unnoticed by the commentators, and might perhaps acquire a little intelligence from himself. But the great and the little oracle together have extinguished that hope, and I despair now of making any curious discoveries about him.

Since Flaxman (which I did not know till your letter told me so) has been at work for the Iliad, as well as the Odyssey, it seems a great pity, that the engravings should not be bound up with some Homer or other; and, as I said before, I should have been too proud to have bound them up in mine. But there is an objection, at least such it seems to me, that threatens to disqualify them for such a use, namely, the shape and size of them, which are such, that no book of the usual form could possibly receive them, save in a folded state, which I apprehend would be to murder them.

The monument of Lord Mansfield, for which you say he is engaged, will (I dare say) prove a noble effort of genius. Statuaries, as I have heard an eminent one say, do not much trouble themselves about a likeness; else I would give much to be able to communicate to Flaxman the perfect idea that I have of the subject, such as he was forty years ago. He was at that time wonderfully handsome, and would expound the most mysterious intricacies of the law, or recapitulate both matter and evidence of a cause, as long as from hence to Eartham, with an intelligent smile on his features, that bespoke plainly the perfect ease with which he did it. The most abstruse studies (I believe) never cost him any labour.

You say nothing lately of your intended journey our way: yet the year is waning, and the shorter days give you a hint to lose no time unnecessarily. Lately we had the whole family at the Hall, and now we have nobody. The Throckmortons are gone into Berkshire, and the Courtenays into Yorkshire. They are so pleasant a family, that I heartily wish you to see them; and at the same time wish to see you before they return, which will not be sooner than October. How shall I reconcile these wishes seemingly opposite? Why, by wishing that you may come soon and stay long. I know no other way of doing it.

My poor Mary is much as usual. I have set up Homer's head, and inscribed the pedestal; my own Greek at the top, with your translation under it, and

Ὡς δὲ παις ὦ παιζ', &c.

It makes altogether a very smart and learned appearance. W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Aug. 29, 1793.

YOUR question, at what time your coming to us will be most agreeable, is a knotty one, and such as, had I the wisdom of Solomon, I should be puzzled to answer. I will therefore leave it still a question, and refer the time of your journey Westonward entirely to your own election: adding this one limitation however, that I do not wish to see you exactly at present, on account of the unfinished state of my study, the wainscot of which still smells of paint, and which is not yet papered. But to return: as I have insinuated, thy pleasant company is the thing which I always wish, and as much at one time as at another. I believe, if I examine myself minutely, since I despair of ever having it in the height of summer, which for your sake I should desire most, the depth of the winter is the season which would be most eligible to me. For then it is that, in general, I have most need of a cordial, and particularly in the month of January. I am sorry however that I have departed so far from my first purpose, and am answering a question which I declared myself unable to answer. Choose thy own time, secure of this, that whatever time that be, it will always to us be a welcome one.

I thank you for your pleasant extract of Miss Fanshaw's letter.

> Her pen drops eloquence as sweet
> As any muse's tongue can speak;
> Nor need a scribe, like her, regret
> Her want of Latin or of Greek.

And now, my dear, adieu! I have done more than I expected, and begin to feel myself exhausted with so much scribbling at the end of four hours' close application to study. W. C

TO THE REV. JOHN JOHNSON.

My dearest Johnny, *Weston, Sept.* 6, 1793.

To do a kind thing, and in a kind manner, is a double kindness, and no man is more addicted to both than you, or more skilful in contriving them. Your plan to surprise me agreeably succeeded to admiration. It was only the day before yesterday that, while we walked after dinner in the orchard, Mrs. Unwin between Sam and me, hearing the hall clock, I observed a great difference between that and ours, and began immediately to lament as I had often done, that there was not a sun-dial in all Weston to ascertain the true time for us. My complaint was long, and lasted till having turned into the grass walk, we reached the new building at the end of it; where we sat awhile and reposed ourselves. In a few minutes we returned by the way we came, when what think you was my astonishment to see what I had not seen before, though I had passed close by it, a smart sun-dial mounted on a smart stone pedestal! I assure you it seemed the effect of conjuration. I stopped short, and exclaimed,—"Why, here is a sun-dial, and upon our ground! How is this? Tell me Sam, how came it here? Do you know any thing about it?" At first I really thought (that is to say, as soon as I could think at all) that this factotum of mine, Sam Roberts, having often heard me deplore the want of one, had given orders for the supply of that want himself, without my knowledge, and was half pleased and half offended. But he soon exculpated himself by imputing the fact to you. It was brought up to Weston (it seems) about noon: but Andrews stopped the cart at the blacksmith's, whence he sent to inquire if I was gone for my walk. As it happened, I walked not till two o'clock. So there it stood waiting till I should go forth, and was introduced before my return. Fortunately too I went out at the church end of the village, and consequently saw nothing of it. How I could possibly pass it without seeing it, when it stood in the walk, I know not, but it is certain that I did. And where I shall fix it now, I know as little. It cannot stand between the two gates, the place of your choice, as I understand from Samuel, because the hay-cart must pass that way in the season. But we are now busy in winding the walk all round the orchard, and in doing so shall doubtless stumble at last upon some open spot that will suit it.

There it shall stand, while I live, a constant monument of your kindness.

I have this moment finished the twelfth book of the Odyssey; and I read the Iliad to Mrs. Unwin every evening.

The effect of this reading is, that I still spy blemishes, something at least that I can mend, so that, after all, the transcript of alterations, which you and George have made, will not be a perfect one. It would be foolish to forego an opportunity of improvement for such a reason; neither will I. It is ten o'clock, and I must breakfast. Adieu, therefore, my dear Johnny! Remember your appointment to see us in October. Ever yours,

W. C.

TO WILLIAM HALEY, ESQ.

Weston, Sept. 8, 1793.

Non sum quod simulo, my dearest brother! I seem cheerful upon paper sometimes, when I am absolutely the most dejected of all creatures. Desirous however to gain something myself by my own letters, unprofitable as they may and must be to my friends, I keep melancholy out of them as much as I can, that I may, if possible, by assuming a less gloomy air, deceive myself, and, by feigning with a continuance, improve the fiction into reality.

So you have seen Flaxman's figures, which I intended you should not have seen till I had spread them before you. How did you dare to look at them? You should have covered your eyes with both hands. I am charmed with Flaxman's Penelope, and though you don't deserve that I should, will send you a few lines, such as they are, with which she inspired me the other day, while I was taking my noon-day walk.

I know not that you will meet any body here, when we see you in October, unless perhaps my Johnny should happen to be with us. If Tom is charmed with the thoughts of coming to Weston, we are equally so with the thoughts of seeing him here. At his years, I should hardly hope to make his visit agreeable to him, did I not know that he is of a temper and disposition that must make him happy every where. Give our love to him. If Romney can come with you, we have both room to receive him, and hearts to make him most welcome.

W. C.

TO MRS. COURTENAY.

Sept. 15, 1793.

A thousand thanks, my dearest Catharina, for your pleasant letter; one of the pleasantest that I have received since your departure. You are very good to apologize for your delay, but I had not flattered myself with the hopes of a speedier answer. Knowing full well your talents for entertaining your friends who are present, I was sure you would with difficulty find half an hour that you could devote to an absent one.

I am glad that you think of your return. Poor Weston is a desolation without you. In the mean

time I amuse myself as well as I can, thrumming old Homer's lyre, and turning the premises upside down. Upside down indeed, for so it is literally that I have been dealing with the orchard, almost ever since you went, digging and delving it around to make a new walk, which now begins to assume the shape of one, and to look as if some time or other it may serve in that capacity. Taking my usual exercise there the other day with Mrs. Unwin, a wide disagreement between your clock and ours, occasioned me to complain much, as I have often done, of the want of a dial. Guess my surprise, when at the close of my complaint I saw one—saw one close at my side; a smart one, glittering in the sun, and mounted on a pedestal of stone. I was astonished. "This," I exclaimed, "is absolute conjuration!" It was a most mysterious affair, but the mystery was at last explained.

This scribble I presume will find you just arrived at Bucklands. I would with all my heart that since dials can be thus suddenly conjured from one place to another, I could be so too, and could start up before your eyes in the middle of some walk or lawn, where you and Lady Frog are wandering.

While Pitcairne whistles for his family estate in Fifeshire, he will do well if he will sound a few notes for me. I am originally of the same shire, and a family of my name is still there, to whom perhaps he way whistle on my behalf, not altogether in vain. So shall his fife excel all my poetical efforts, which have not yet, and I dare say never will, effectually charm one acre of ground into my possession.

Remember me to Sir John, Lady Frog, and your husband—tell them I love them all. She told me once she was jealous, now indeed she seems to have some reasons, since to her I have not written, and have written twice to you. But bid her be of good courage, in due time I will give her proof of my constancy. W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN JOHNSON.

Weston, Sept. 29, 1793.

MY DEAREST JOHNNY,

You have done well to leave off visiting, and being visited. Visits are insatiable devourers of time, and fit only for those who, if they did not that, would do nothing. The worst consequence of such departures from common practice is to be termed a singular sort of a fellow, or an odd fish; a sort of reproach that a man might be wise enough to condemn, who had not half your understanding.

I look forward with pleasure to October the eleventh, the day which I expect will be *Albo notandus lapillo*, on account of your arrival here.

Here you will meet Mr. Rose, who comes on the eighth, and brings with him Mr. Lawrence, the painter, you may guess for what purpose. Lawrence returns when he has made his copy of me, but Mr. Rose will remain perhaps as long as you will. Hayley on the contrary will come, I suspose, just in time not to see you. Him we expect on the twentieth. I trust however, that thou wilt so order thy pastoral matters, as to make thy stay here as long as possible.

Lady Hesketh, in her last letter, inquires very kindly after you, asks me for your address, and purposes soon to write to you. We hope to see her in November—so that after a summer without company, we are likely to have an autumn and a winter sociable enough. W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, Oct. 5, 1793.

My good intentions towards you, my dearest brother, are continually frustrated; and which is most provoking, not by such engagements and avocations as have a right to my attention, such as those to my Mary, and to the old bard of Greece, but by mere impertinences, such as calls of civility from persons not very interesting to me, and letters from a distance still less interesting, because the writers of them are strangers. A man sent me a long copy of verses, which I could do no less than acknowledge. They were silly enough, and cost me eighteen pence, which was seventeen pence halfpenny farthing more than they were worth. Another sent me at the same time a plan, requesting my opinion of it, and that I would lend him my name as editor; a request with which I shall not comply, but I am obliged to tell him so, and one letter is all that I have time to despatch in a day, sometimes half a one, and sometimes I am not able to write at all. Thus it is that my time perishes, and I can neither give so much of it as I would to you or to any other valuable purpose.

On Tuesday we expect company, Mr. Rose and Lawrence the painter. Yet once more is my patience to be exercised, and once more I am made to wish that my face had been moveable, to put on and take off at pleasure, so as to be portable in a bandbox, and sent to the artist. These however will be gone, as I believe I told you, before you arrive, at which time I know not that any body will be here, except my Johnny, whose presence will not at all interfere with our readings—you will not, I believe, find me a very slashing critic—I hardly indeed expect to find any thing in your life of Milton that I shall sentence to amputation. How should it be too long? A well written work, sensible and spirited, such as

yours was, when I saw it, is never so. But however we shall see. I promise to spare nothing that I think may be lopped off with advantage.

I began this letter yesterday, but could not finish it till now. I have risen this morning like an infernal frog out of Acheron, covered with the ooze and mud of melancholy. For this reason I am not sorry to find myself at the bottom of my paper, for had I more room perhaps I might fill it all with croaking, and make an heart ache at Eartham, which I wish to be always cheerful. Adieu. My poor sympathizing Mary is of course sad, but always mindful of you. W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

MY DEAR BROTHER, *Oct.* 18, 1792.

I HAVE not at present much that is necessary to say here, because I shall have the happiness of seeing you so soon; my time, according to custom, is a mere scrap, for which reason such must be my letter also.

You will find here more than I have hitherto given you reason to expect, but none who will not be happy to see you. These however stay with us but a short time, and will leave us in full possession of Weston on Wednesday next.

I look forward with joy to your coming, heartily wishing you a pleasant journey, in which my poor Mary joins me. Give our best love to Tom; without whom, after being taught to look for him, we should feel our pleasure in the interview much diminished.

Læti expectamus te puerumque tuum.

W. C.

TO THE REV. J. JEKYLL RYE.

MY DEAR SIR, *Weston, Nov.* 3, 1793.

SENSIBLE as I am of your kindness in taking such a journey, at no very pleasant season, merely to serve a friend of mine, I can not allow my thanks to sleep till I may have the pleasure of seeing you. I hope never to show myself unmindful of so great a favour. Two lines which I received yesterday from Mr. Hurdis, written hastily on the day of decision, informed me that it was made in his favour, and by a majority of twenty. I have great satisfaction in the event, and consequently hold myself indebted to all who at my instance have contributed to it.

You may depend on me for due attention to the honest clerk's request. When he called, it was not possible that I should answer your obliging letter; for he arrived here very early, and if I suffered any thing to interfere with my morning studies I should never accomplish my labours. Your hint concerning the subject for this year's copy is a very good one, and shall not be neglected.

I remain, sincerely yours, W. C.

TO MRS. COURTENAY.

Weston, Nov. 4, 1793.

I SELDOM rejoice in a day of soaking rain like this; but in this, my dearest Catharina, I do rejoice sincerely, because it affords me an opportunity of writing to you, which if fair weather had invited us into the orchard walk at the usual hour, I should not easily have found. I am a most busy man, busy to a degree that sometimes half distracts me; but if complete distraction be occasioned by having the thoughts too much and too long attached to a single point, I am in no danger of it, with such a perpetual whirl are mine whisked about from one subject to another. When two poets meet there are fine doings I can assure you. My Homer finds work for Hayley, and his Life of Milton work for me, so that we are neither of us one moment idle. Poor Mrs. Unwin in the mean time sits quiet in her corner, occasionally laughing at us both, and not seldom interrupting us with some question or remark, for which she is constantly rewarded by me with a "Hush—hold your peace." Bless yourself, my dear Catharina, that you are not connected with a poet, especially that you have not two to deal with; ladies who have, may be bidden indeed to hold their peace, but very little peace have they. How should they in fact have any, continually enjoined as they are to be silent?

* * * * * *

The same fever that has been so epidemic there, has been severely felt here likewise; some have died, and a multitude have been in danger. Two under our own roof have been infected with it, and I am not sure that I have perfectly escaped myself, but I am now well again.

I have persuaded Hayley to stay a week longer, and again my hopes revive, that he may yet have an opportunity to know my friends before he returns into Sussex. I write amidst a chaos of interruptions, Hayley on one hand spouts Greek, and on the other hand, Mrs. Unwin continues talking, sometimes to us, and sometimes, because we are both too busy to attend to her, she holds a dialogue with herself.—Query, is not this a bull—and ought I not instead of dialogue to have said soliloquy?

Adieu. With our united love to all your party, and with ardent wishes soon to see you all at Weston, I remain, my dearest Catharina,

Ever yours, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Weston, Nov.* 5, 1793.

In a letter from Lady Hesketh, which I received not long since, she informed me how very pleasantly she had spent some time at Wargrave. We now begin to expect her here, where our charms of situation are perhaps not equal to yours, yet by no means contemptible. She told me she had spoken to you in very handsome terms of the country round about us, but not so of our house, and the view before. The house itself however is not unworthy some commendation; small as it is, it is neat, and neater than she is aware of; for my study and the room over it have been repaired and beautified this summer, and little more was wanting to make it an abode sufficiently commodious for a man of my moderate desires. As to the prospect from it, that she misrepresented strangely, as I hope soon to have an opportunity to convince her by ocular demonstration. She told you, I know, of certain cottages opposite to us, or rather she described them as poor houses and hovels that effectually blind our windows. But none such exist. On the contrary, the opposite object, and the only one, is an orchard, so well planted, and with trees of such growth, that we seem to look into a wood, or rather to be surrounded by one. Thus, placed as we are in the midst of a village, we have none of the disagreeables that belong to such a position, and the village itself is one of the prettiest I know; terminated at one end by the church tower, seen through trees, and at the other, by a very handsome gateway, opening into a fine grove of elms, belonging to our neighbour Courtenay. How happy should I be to show it instead of describing it to you!

Adieu, my dear friend, W. C.

TO THE REV. WALTER BAGOT.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Weston, Nov.* 10, 1793.

You are very kind to consider my literary engagements, and to make them a reason for not interrupting me more frequently with a letter; but though I am indeed as busy as an author or an editor can well be, and am not apt to be overjoyed at the arrival of letters from uninteresting quarters, I shall always I hope have leisure both to peruse and to answer those of my real friends, and to do both with pleasure.

I have to thank you much for your benevolent aid in the affair of my friend Hurdis. You have doubtless learned ere now, that he has succeeded, and carried the prize by a majority of twenty. He is well qualified for the post he has gained. So much the better for the honour of the Oxonian laurel, and so much the more for the credit of those who have favoured him with their suffrages.

I am entirely of your mind respecting this conflagration by which all Europe suffers at present, and is likely to suffer for a long time to come. The same mistake seems to have prevailed as in the American business. We then flattered ourselves that the colonies would prove an easy conquest: and when all the neighbour nations armed themselves against France, we imagined I believe that she too would be presently vanquished. But we begin already to be undeceived, and God only knows to what a degree we may find we have erred, at the conclusion. Such however is the state of things all around us, as reminds me continually of the Psalmist's expression—"*He shall break them in pieces like a potter's vessel.*"—And I rather wish than hope in some of my melancholy moods that England herself may escape a fracture. I remain truly yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. MR. HURDIS.

MY DEAR SIR, *Weston, Nov.* 24, 1793.

Though my congratulations have been delayed, you have no friend, numerous as your friends are, who has more sincerely rejoiced in your success than I! It was no small mortification to me to find that three out of the six, whom I had engaged, were not qualified to vote. You have prevailed, however, and by a considerable majority; there is therefore no room left for regret. When your short note arrived, which gave me the agreeable news of your victory, our friend of Eartham was with me, and shared largely in the joy that I felt on the occasion. He left me but a few days since, having spent somewhat more than a fortnight here; during which time we employed all our leisure hours in the revisal of his Life of Milton. It is now finished, and a very finished work it is; and one that will do great honour, I am persuaded, to the biographer, and the excellent man, of injured memory, who is the subject of it. As to my own concern, with the works of this first of poets, which has been long a matter of burthensome contemplation, I have the happiness to find at last that I am at liberty to postpone my labours. While I expected that my commentary would be called for in the ensuing spring, I looked forward to the undertaking with dismay, not seeing a shadow of probability that I should be ready to answer the demand. For this ultimate revisal of my Homer, together with the notes, occupies completely at present (and will for some time longer) all the little leisure that I have for study: leisure which I gain at this season of the year by rising long before day-light.

You are now become a nearer neighbour, and,

as your professorship, I hope, will not engross you wholly, will find an opportunity to give me your company at Weston. Let me hear from you soon, tell me how you like your new office, and whether you perform the duties of it with pleasure to yourself. With much pleasure to others you will, I doubt not, and with equal advantage. W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Weston, Nov.* 29, 1793.

I HAVE risen while the owls are still hooting, to pursue my accustomed labours in the mine of Homer; but before I enter upon them, shall give the first moment of daylight to the purpose of thanking you for your last letter, containing many pleasant articles of intelligence, with nothing to abate the pleasantness of them, except the single circumstance that we are not likely to see you here so soon as I expected. My hope was, that the first frost would bring you, and the amiable painter with you. If however you are prevented by the business of your respective professions, you are well prevented, and I will endeavour to be patient. When the latter was here, he mentioned one day the subject of Diomede's horses, driven under the axle of his chariot by the thunderbolt which fell at their feet, as a subject for his pencil. It is certainly a noble one, and therefore worthy of his study and attention. It occurred to me at the moment, but I know not what it was that made me forget it again the next moment, that the horses of Achilles flying over the foss, with Patroclus and Automedon in the chariot, would be a good companion for it. Should you happen to recollect this, when you next see him, you may submit it, if you please, to his consideration. I stumbled yesterday on another subject, which reminded me of said excellent artist, as likely to afford a fine opportunity to the expression that he could give it. It is found in the shooting match in the twenty-third book of the Iliad, between Meriones and Teucer. The former cuts the string with which the dove is tied to the mast-head, and sets her at liberty; the latter standing at his side, in all the eagerness of emulation, points an arrow at the mark with his right hand, while with his left he snatches the bow from his competitor. He is a fine poetical figure, but Mr. Lawrence himself must judge whether or not he promises as well for the canvass.

He does great honour to my physiognomy by his intention to get it engraved; and though I think I foresee that this *private publication* will grow in time into a publication of absolute publicity, I find it impossible to be dissatisfied with any thing that seems eligible both to him and you. To say the truth, when a man has once turned his mind inside out for the inspection of all who choose to inspect it, to make a secret of his face seems but little better than a self contradiction. At the same time, however, I shall be best pleased if it be kept, according to your intentions, as a rarity

I have lost Hayley, and begin to be uneasy at not hearing from him: tell me about him when you write.

I should be happy to have a work of mine embellished by Lawrence, and made a companion for a work of Hayley's. It is an event to which I look forward with the utmost complacence. I can not tell you what a relief I feel it, not to be pressed for Milton. W. C.

TO SAMUEL ROSE, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, *Weston, Dec.* 8, 1793.

IN my last I forgot to thank you for the box of books, containing also the pamphlets. We have read, that is to say, my cousin has, who reads to us in an evening, the history of Jonathan Wild, and found it highly entertaining. The satire on great men is witty, and I believe perfectly just: we have no censure to pass on it, unless that we think the character of Mrs. Heartfree not well sustained; not quite delicate in the latter part of it; and that the constant effect of her charms upon every man who sees her has a sameness in it that is tiresome, and betrays either much carelessness, or idleness, or lack of invention. It is possible indeed that the author might intend by this circumstance a satirical glance at novelists, whose heroines are generally all bewitching; but it is a fault that he had better have noticed in another manner, and not have exemplified in his own.

The first volume of *Man as he is*, has lain unread in my study window this twelvemonth, and would have been returned unread to its owner, had not my cousin come in good time to save it from that disgrace. We are now reading it, and find it excellent: abounding with wit, and just sentiment, and knowledge both of books and men. Adieu. W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, Dec. 8, 1793.

I HAVE waited, and waited impatiently, for a line from you, and am at last determined to send you one, to inquire what is become of you, and why you are silent so much longer than usual.

I want to know many things which only you can tell me, but especially I want to know what has been the issue of your conference with Nichol. Has he seen your work? I am impatient for the appearance of it, because impatient to have the

spotless credit of the great poet's character, as a man and a citizen, vindicated as it ought to be, and as it never will be again.

It is a great relief to me that my Miltonic labours are suspended. I am now busy in transcribing the alterations of Homer, having finished the whole revisal. I must then write a new Preface, which done I shall endeavour immediately to descant on *The Four Ages*. Adieu, my dear brother. W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, Dec. 17, 1793.

O Jove! and all ye Gods! grant this my son
To prove, like me, pre-eminent in Troy!
In valour such, and firmness of command!
Be he extoll'd when he returns from fight,
As far his sire's superior! may he slay
His enemy, bring home his gory spoils,
And may his mother's heart o'erflow with joy!

I ROSE this morning, at six o'clock, on purpose to translate this prayer again, and to write to my dear brother. Here you have it, such as it is, not perfectly according to my own liking, but as well as I could make it, and I think better than either yours, or Lord Thurlow's. You with your six lines have made yourself stiff and ungraceful, and he with his seven has produced as good prose as heart can wish, but no poetry at all. A scrupulous attention to the letter has spoiled you both, you have neither the spirit nor the manner of Homer. A portion of both may be found I believe in my version, but not so much as I wish—it is better however than the printed one. His lordship's two first lines I can not very well understand; he seems to me to give a sense to the original that does not belong to it. Hector, I apprehend, does not say, "Grant that he may prove himself my son, and be eminent, &c.—but grant that this my son may prove eminent"—which is a material difference. In the latter sense I find the simplicity of an ancient; in the former, that is to say, in the notion of a man proving himself his father's son by similar merit, the finesse and dexterity of a modern. His lordship too makes the man, who gives the young hero his commendation, the person who returns from battle; whereas Homer makes the young hero himself that person, at least if Clarke is a just interpreter, which I suppose is hardly to be disputed.

If my old friend would look into my preface, he would find a principle laid down there, which perhaps it would not be easy to invalidate, and which properly attended to would equally secure a translation from stiffness and from wildness. The principle I mean is this—"Close, but not so close as to be servile! free, but not so free as to be licentious!" A superstitious fidelity loses the spirit, and a loose deviation the sense of the translated author—a happy moderation in either case is the only possible way of preserving both.

Thus have I disciplined you both; and now, if you please, you may both discipline me. I shall not enter my version in my book till it has undergone your strictures at least; and should you write to the noble critic again, you are welcome to submit it to his. We are three awkward fellows indeed, if we can not amongst us make a tolerably good translation of six lines of Homer. Adieu.
W. C.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

MY DEAR HAYLEY, *Weston, Jan.* 5, 1794.

I HAVE waited, but waited in vain, for a propitious moment, when I might give my old friend's objections the consideration they deserve; I shall at last be forced to send a vague answer, unworthy to be sent to a person accustomed, like him, to close reasoning and abstruse discussion, for I rise after ill rest, and with a frame of mind perfectly unsuited to the occasion. I sit too at the window for light's sake, where I am so cold, that my pen slips out of my fingers. First, I will give you a translation *de novo* of this untranslated prayer. It is shaped as nearly as I could contrive to his lordship's ideas, but I have little hope that it will satisfy him.

Grant Jove, and ye Gods, that this my son
Be, as myself have been, illustrious here!
A valiant man! and let him reign in Troy;
May all who witness his return from fight
Hereafter, say———he far excels his sire;
And let him bring back gory trophies, stript
From foes slain by him, to his mother's joy.

Imlac, in Rasselas, says—I forget to whom, "You have convinced me that it is impossible to be a poet." In like manner, I might say to his lordship, you have convinced me that it is impossible to be a translator; to be a translator, on his terms, at least, is I am sure impossible. On his terms I would defy Homer himself, were he alive, to translate the Paradise Lost into Greek. Yet Milton had Homer much in his eye when he composed that poem. Whereas Homer never thought of me or my translation. There are minutiæ in every language, which transfused into another will spoil the version. Such extreme fidelity is in fact unfaithful. Such close resemblance takes away all likeness. The original is elegant, easy, natural; the copy is clumsy, constrained, unnatural: To what is this owing? To the adoption of terms not congenial to your purpose, and of a context, such as no man writing an original work would make use of. Homer is every thing that a poet should be. A translation of Ho-

mer, so made, will be every thing that a translation of Homer should not be. Because it will be written in no language under Heaven. It will be English, and it will be Greek, and therefore it will be neither. He is the man, whoever he be (I do not pretend to be that man myself,) he is the man best qualified as a translator of Homer, who was drenched, and steeped, and soaked himself in the effusions of his genius till he has imbibed their colour to the bone; and who, when he is thus dyed through and through, distinguishing between what is essentially Greek, and what may be habited in English, rejects the former, and is faithful to the latter, as far as the purpose of fine poetry will permit, and no further; this I think, may be easily proved. Homer is every where remarkable either for ease, dignity, or energy of expression; for grandeur of conception, and a majestic flow of numbers. If we copy him so closely as to make every one of these excellent properties of his absolutely unattainable, which will certainly be the effect of too close a copy, instead of translating, we murder him. Therefore, after all that his lordship has said, I still hold freedom to be indispensable. Freedom, I mean with respect to the expression: freedom so limited, as never to leave behind the *matter:* but at the same time indulged with a sufficient scope to secure the spirit, and as much as possible of the manner. I say as much as possible, because an English manner must differ from a Greek one, in order to be graceful, and for this there is no remedy. Can an ungraceful, awkward translation of Homer be a good one? No. But a graceful, easy, natural, faithful version of him, will not that be a good one? Yes. Allow me but this, and I insist upon it, that such an one may be produced on my principles, and can be produced on no other.

I have not had time to criticise his lordship's other version. You know how little time I have for any thing, and can tell him so.

Adieu! my dear brother. I have now tired both you and myself; and with the love of the whole trio, remain Yours ever, W. C.

Reading his lordship's sentiments over again, I am inclined to think that in all I have said, I have only given him back the same in other terms. He disallows both the absolute *free*, and the absolute *close*—so do I; and, if I understand myself, have said so in my Preface He wishes to recommend a medium, though he wlll not call it so; so do I; only we express it differently. What is it then we dispute about? My head is not good enough to-day to discover.

TO LADY HESKETH.

DEAR COUSIN, *Mundsley, Oct.* 13, 1793.

You describe delightful scenes, but you describe them to one, who if he even saw them, could receive no delight from them: who has a faint recollection, and so faint, as to be like an almost forgotten dream, that once he was susceptible of pleasure from such causes. The country that you have had in prospect has been always famed for its beauties; but the wretch who can derive no gratification from a view of nature, even under the disadvantage of her most ordinary dress, will have no eyes to admire her in any.

In one day, in one minute, I should rather have said, she became an universal blank to me; and though from a different cause, yet with an effect as difficult to remove, as blindness itself.

* * * * * * *

THE END OF COWPER'S WORKS.

THE

POETICAL WORKS

OF

JAMES THOMSON.

Contents.

The articles marked with an asterisk have never before appeared in any edition of Thomson's Poems, and some of them are printed for the first time from the Author's MS.

Page.

Memoir of James Thomson, - - - - - lv
Addenda to the Memoir of Thomson, - - - xxvi
Commendatory Verses, - - - - - - - xxxv

THE SEASONS.

Spring, - - - - - - - - - - 1
Summer, - - - - - - - - - 12
Autumn, - - - - - - - - - 29
Winter, - - - - - - - - - 41
Hymn, - - - - - - - - - - 51
Specimen of Alterations, - - - - - 53
Castle of Indolence, Canto I. - - - - - ib.
Canto II. - - - - - - - 62
Glossary, - - - - - - 70
Britannia, - - - - - - - - - 71
Liberty, Part I. Ancient and Modern Italy compared, 74
Part II. Greece, - - - - - - - 78
Part III. Rome, - - - - - - - 83
Part IV. Britain, - - - - - - - 89
Part V. The Prospect, - - - - - 101

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

To the Memory of Lord Talbot, - - - - - 108
To the Memory of Sir Isaac Newton, - - - - 111
On the Death of Mr. Alkman, - - - - - 113
Epitaph on Miss Stanley, - - - - - - ib.
On the Death of his Mother, - - - - - 114
The Happy Man, - - - - - - - - ib.
A Paraphrase on the latter part of the Sixth Chapter of Matthew, - - - - - - - - 115
On Æolus's Harp, - - - - - - - - ib.
Hymn on Solitude, - - - - - - - ib.
To Seraphina, - - - - - - - - 116
Verses addressed to Amanda, - - - - - ib.
Verses addressed to Amanda, with "The Seasons," - ib.

SONGS.

A Nuptial Song, - - - - - - - ib.
*To Amanda, - - - - - - - - 117
To Amanda, - - - - - - - - ib.
To Fortune, - - - - - - - - ib.
Come, gentle God, - - - - - - - ib.
To her I love, - - - - - - - - 118
To the God of fond desire, - - - - - ib.
The Lover's Fate, - - - - - - ib.
To the Nightingale, - - - - - - ib.
To Myra, - - - - - - - - - ib.

Page.

SONGS IN THE MASQUE OF ALFRED.

To Peace, - - - - - - - - - 119
To Alfred, - - - - - - - - - ib.
Sweet Valley, say, - - - - - - - ib.
From those eternal Regions, - - - - - ib.
Contentment, - - - - - - - - ib.
Rule Britannia, - - - - - - - ib.
To the Rev. Patrick Murdoch, - - - - - 120
To his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, - - ib
*To Dr. De la Cour, in Ireland, on his "Prospect of Poetry," - - - - - - - - - ib
*Hymn to God's Power, - - - - - - - 121
*A Poetical Epistle to Sir William Bennet, Bart. of Grubbat, - - - - - - - - - ib
*On Mrs. Mendez' Birthday, - - - - - 122
*An Elegy upon James Therburn, - - - - - ib
On the Report that a Wooden Bridge was to be built at Westminster, - - - - - - - ib.
The Incomparable Soporific Doctor, - - - - ib.
*Lisy's Parting with her Cat, - - - - - 123
*On the Hoop, - - - - - - - - ib.
*Stanzas sent to Mr. Lyttelton soon after the Death of his Wife, - - - - - - - - ib
*On May, - - - - - - - - - ib.
*The Morning in the Country, - - - - - 124
*On a Country Life, - - - - - - - ib
*On Happiness, - - - - - - - - 125
*Verses on receiving a Flower from his Mistress, - 126
Prologue to Tancred and Sigismunda, - - - ib.
Epilogue to Tancred and Sigismunda, - - - - 127
Epilogue to Agamemnon, - - - - - - ib.
Prologue to Mallet's Mustapha, - - - - - ib.
*Psalm civ. paraphrased, - - - - - - 128
*Lines on Marle Field, - - - - - - - 129
*On Beauty, - - - - - - - - ib.
*A Complaint on the Miseries of Life, - - - - 130
*An Elegy on Parting, - - - - - - ib.
*Song—When . . . . blooming Spring, - - 131
*A Pastoral betwixt David, Thirsis, and the Angel Gabriel, upon the Birth of our Saviour, - - ib.
*A Pastoral between Thirsis and Corydon, on the Death of Damon, by whom is meant Mr. W. Riddell - ib.
*A Pastoral Entertainment, - - - - - 132

On the Death of Thomson, by Collins, - - - - ib.
Address to the Shade of Thomson, by Burns, - - 133

Memoir of James Thomson.

"Tutored by thee, sweet Poetry exalts
Her voice of ages; and informs the page
With music, image, sentiment, and thoughts,
Never to die!

The biography of a man whose life was passed in his study, and who is known to the world by his writings alone, can present few facts to render it popular, unless it was chequered by events that excite interest, or marked by traits which lessen esteem. If a Poet has been vicious, the account of the misfortunes which vice never fails to bring, and of its effects on himself, is read with attention; but the career of him who was uniformly virtuous, who experienced no remarkable vicissitudes of fortune, and who was only eminent from the genius which his writings display, must yield in variety of incident to that of a pirate or courtesan.

There is nevertheless much that will gratify a reader whose taste is not so vitiated as to require the excitement of romance, in tracing the progress of a distinguished literary person; and he who is not desirous of knowing the history of a writer whose name is associated with his earliest recollections must be void of every spark of curiosity. A favourite author possesses claims upon our regard similar to those of friendship; and the tale, which would be dull and tiresome if it concerned any other person, is read, or listened to, with the liveliest pleasure.

Thomson's life must be indebted for whatever gratification it may afford to the sympathy of his admirers, since it is destitute of all other attractions. Little has been preserved concerning him, perhaps because very little was deserving of being recorded; and these notices are so scattered that it has required some labour to form the present memoir. He did less for his own history than almost any other poet of the time, as his works contain few egotisms, and his great dislike to correspondence prevented the existence of those familiar letters which form the most delightful materials for biography.

The task of preparing this memoir has, however, been a grateful one. A writer can not be indifferent to the pleasure of rendering justice to merit which has been traduced, and of placing an amiable and unblemished character in its true light. Mankind are too apt to form their judgment on the opinions of superior understandings, without reflecting that none are exempt from caprice even if they be so from errors; and though the statements of an author may be generally just, cases occur in which he is prejudiced or misinformed. It is scarcely necessary to say, that the Life of Thomson by Dr. Johnson is alluded to; and few need be told that this is not the first time his account of the Poet has been charged with injustice. The inquiries necessary for this article have tended to confirm the suspicion that the colossus of literature was influenced by some extraordinary bias against the author of "The Seasons," for not a single notice of him, reflecting upon his character, has been found which is not traceable to Johnson. His Life is sneering and satirical, and he rarely admits Thomson to have possessed a merit without accompanying it by an ungenerous remark. The cause of this conduct must be sought in vain; but the temper of Johnson and his violent political feelings are sufficiently notorious to render the patriotic sentiments which Thomson every where inculcates a sufficient explanation of his hostility, whilst his country may have been another ground for his dislike. Before dismissing Dr. Johnson's Life it is material to state, that his assertions respecting Thomson are entitled to little credit when opposed by other testimony; for it can be proved that he knew little about him, and that he was too negligent to avail himself of the information which he sought. It must be remembered, too, that Johnson never saw him; and that whatever he may have learned from others avails nothing in comparison with the account of his personal and intimate friends whose esteem is in itself ample evidence of his virtues.

James Thomson was the son of the Reverend Mr. Thomson, of Ednam, in the shire of Roxburgh, at which place the Poet was born on the 11th of September, 1700. Less has been said of his parents than they merit, and from the slight manner in which they have been noticed the idea may have arisen that he was of obscure origin.

His father was well descended, and his mother was Beatrix, the daughter and coheiress of Mr. Trotter, of Fogo,* a genteel family in the neighbourhood of Greenlaw in Berwickshire. Though Mr. Thomson's worth was of that unostentatious kind which only entitles him to the praise of being a good father, a good husband, and a good man, fulfilling his clerical duties with pious diligence, and who

> "This noble ensample to his shepe he yaf,
> That first he wrought and afterwards he taught,"

nearly all the sterling parts of human excellence are comprised in that character.

At an early period of the Poet's life, his dawning talents attracted the attention of Mr. Riccarton, a neighbouring clergyman, and a judicious friend of his father, who consented to his superintending his son's education. He was placed at school in Jedburgh, and the care this gentleman bestowed on him was well rewarded by the success which attended his exertions.

Nor was Mr. Riccarton his only patron. Sir William Bennet, of Chesters, near Jedburgh, who was distinguished for his wit, honoured him with his kindness, and invited him to spend his summer vacations at his seat. Under the auspices of these generous friends, and of Sir Gilbert Eliot of Minto, Thomson wrote various pieces; but on the first of January he destroyed the labours of the preceding year, and celebrated the annual conflagration by some humorous verses, stating his reasons for their condemnation. A poetical epistle, addressed to Sir William Bennet, and written in his fourteenth year, has however been lately discovered, and it will be found in this edition of his works.

From Jedburgh he was sent to the university of Edinburgh, being intended for the church; but before he had been two years there, he lost his father, who died so suddenly that he did not see him before his decease, a circumstance which so much increased his grief that he is said to have evinced his affliction in an extraordinary manner. His widowed mother, who was left with nine children slenderly provided for, was advised to remove to Edinburgh, where she remained, living in an economical manner, until James had completed his studies.

Whilst at the University, Thomson contributed three articles to a volume entitled "The Edinburgh Miscellany," printed in that city in 1720, by a club called the Athenian Society. One of them, "On a Country Life, by a Student of the University," and signed with the initial of his name, shows how early the love of rural scenery and pursuits took possession of his mind, and may be deemed the first conceptions of "The Seasons." His productions were rather severely treated by some learned persons into whose hands they fell, and one of his biographers has laboured to prove the want of taste of his judges. This charge is, probably, unjust, for the early pieces of the author of The Seasons afford slight indication of his future powers, and the criticism was far from destroying his attachment to the muses. An accident, connected with the indulgence of his taste, made him suddenly renounce the profession for which he was designed, and his views became directed to London. Mr. Hamilton, the Divinity Professor of Edinburgh, having given Thomson the 104th Psalm as an exercise, he made so poetical a paraphrase of it, that the professor and the audience were equally surprised. After complimenting the writer, he told him that if he expected to be useful in the ministry, he must restrain his imagination, and adopt language more suited to a country congregation; and, according to Dr. Johnson, Mr. Hamilton censured one of the expressions as indecent, if not profane. Part of this paraphrase only has been printed, but a perfect copy will be found in the present edition, not on account of its merits, which are far from conspicuous, but from the circumstances connected with it. The obnoxious line will, however, be sought for in vain; but it may have been altered in this transcript.

This piece having fallen under the notice of Mr. Auditor Benson, he expressed his admiration of it, and added, that if the author came to London, he had no doubt his merit would be properly encouraged. This remark was communicated to Thomson, apparently, by Lady Grizel Baillie, a relation of his mother's, and he accordingly embarked at Leith in the autumn of 1725, but as, on his arrival in the metropolis, he received no assistance from her ladyship, he found himself without money or friends. To what extent he suffered the stings of poverty is uncertain; and his zealous admirer, the Earl of Buchan, is very indignant at the assertion, that "his first want was a pair of shoes." Johnson, on whose authority it rests, is not likely to have invented the statement: and, as it reflects no discredit on the Poet, whether it arose from a temporary exhaustion of his finances, or from the impossibility of recruiting them, excepting by the sale of one of his works, his Lordship's anger is misplaced.

That he was stored with letters of introduction may be supposed; but, having tied them up in a handkerchief, they were stolen from him, an accident sufficiently disastrous to a young stranger, in the metropolis, to explain the condition in which he is represented to have found himself.

* Mrs. Thomson's sister married first a Mr. Hume, and secondly the Rev. Mr. Nicolson, Minister of Preston and Bunkle. Their daughter Elizabeth married her namesake, Robert Nicholson, of Lonend near Berwick-on-Tweed, the great grandfather of Alexander Nicholson, Esq. of East Court, Charlton Regis.

Shortly after Thomson left Edinburgh, he lost his mother, whom he loved with all a son's tenderness, and to whose talents and virtues he was eminently indebted for the cultivation of his own. In the poem which he wrote to her memory, he thus feelingly adverts to the moment when he took his last leave of her:—

"When on the margin of the briny flood,
Chill'd with a sad presaging damp I stood,
Took the last look, ne'er to behold her more,
And mixed our murmurs with the wavy roar,
Heard the last words fall from her pious tongue,
Then, wild into the bulging vessel flung,
Which soon, too soon, convey'd me from her sight,
Dearer than life, and liberty, and light!"

A very interesting letter from Thomson to his friend Dr. Cranston, written about this time, proves that he was nearly destitute of money; and it is extremely deserving of attention from the statement that the idea of writing The Seasons originated from reading a poem on Winter, by Mr. Rickleton, which sets at rest the dispute whether that poem was composed before or after his arrival in London.* It is without a date, but must have been written in September 1726; and, as the post mark was Barnet,† it seems he then resided in that village.

"DEAR SIR,

"I would chide you for the slackness of your correspondence; but, having blamed you wrongfully last time, I shall say nothing until I hear from you, which I hope will be soon.

"There is a little business I would communicate to you before I come to the more entertaining part of our correspondence. I am going, hard task! to complain, and beg your assistance. When I came up here I brought very little money along with me, expecting some more upon the selling of Widehope, which was to have been sold that day my mother was buried. Now it is unsold yet; but will be disposed of as soon as it can be conveniently done, though indeed it is perplexed with some difficulties. I was a long time here living at my own charges, and you know how expensive that is; this, together with the furnishing of myself with clothes, linen, one thing and another, to fit me for any business of this nature here, necessarily obliged me to contract some debts. Being a stranger here, it is a wonder how I got any credit; but I can not expect it will be long sustained unless I immediately clear it. Even now, I believe, it is at a crisis. My friends have no money to send me till the land is sold, and my creditors will not wait till then: you know what the consequences would be. Now the assistance I would beg of you, and which I know, if in your power, you will not refuse me, is a letter of credit on some merchant, banker, or such like person in London, for the matter of twelve pounds, till I get money upon the selling of the land, which I am at last certain of. If you could either give it me yourself, or procure it, though you do not owe it to my merit, yet you owe it to your own nature, which I know so well as to say no more on the subject; only allow me to add that when I first fell upon such a project, the only thing I have for it in my present circumstances, knowing the selfish, inhumane temper of the generality of the world, you were the first person that offered to my thoughts as one to whom I had the confidence to make such an address.

"Now I imagine you seized with a fine, romantic, kind of a melancholy on the fading of the year; now I figure you wandering, philosophical and pensive, amidst the brown, withered groves, while the leaves rustle under your feet, the sun gives a farewell parting gleam, and the birds

Stir the faint note, and but attempt to sing.

"Then again, when the heavens wear a more gloomy aspect, the winds whistle, and the waters spout, I see you in the well known Cleugh, beneath the solemn arch of tall, thick, embowering trees, listening to the amusing lull of the many steep, moss-grown cascades; while deep, divine contemplation, the genius of the place, prompts each swelling awful thought. I am sure you would not resign your part in that scene at an easy rate. None ever enjoyed it to the height you do, and you are worthy of it. There I walk in spirit, and disport in its beloved gloom. This country I am in is not very entertaining; no variety but that of woods, and them we have in abundance; but where is the living stream? the airy mountain? and the hanging rock? with twenty other things that elegantly please the lover of nature. Nature delights me in every form, I am just now painting her in her most lugubrious dress for my own amusement, describing Winter as it presents itself. After my first proposal of the subject,

I sing of Winter, and his gelid reign,
Nor let a rhyming insect of the Spring

* A writer in the Literary Gazette asserts that "Winter" was written previous to this period, during the vacations, when Thomson retired from Edinburgh to Roxburghshire, where it is a current tale that he composed the awful picture of the man perishing in the snow, while on a visit to a friend among the wild hills about Yetholm, eight or nine miles from Kelso and Ednam, the place of his birth. Foulkner, however, in his Historical and Topographical Account of Fulham, p. 359, says:—"In a room in the Dove Coffee-house, situated facing the water-side, between the Upper and Lower Mall at Hammersmith, Thompson wrote his Winter. He was in the habit of frequenting this house during the winter season, when the Thames was frozen, and the surrounding country covered with snow. This fact is well authenticated, and many persons visit the house to the present day."

† Query, Barnes, on the banks of the Thames?

Deem it a barren theme. To me 'tis full
Of manly charms; to me, who court the shade,
Whom the gay seasons suit not, and who shun
The glare of Summer. Welcome, kindred glooms!
Drear, awful, wintry horrors, welcome all! &c.

"After this introduction, I say, which insists for a few lines further, I prosecute the purport of the following ones:

Nor can I, O, departing Summer! choose
But consecrate one pitying line to you;
Sing your last temper'd days, and sunny calms,
That cheer the spirits and serene the soul.

'Then terrible floods, and high winds, that usually happen about this time of the year, and have already happened here, I wish you have not felt them too dreadfully; the first produced the inclosed lines; the last are not completed. Mr. Rickleton's Poem on Winter, which I still have, first put the design into my head. In it are some masterly strokes that awakened me: being only a present amusement, it is ten to one but I drop it whenever another fancy comes across.

"I believe it had been much more for your entertainment if in this letter I had cited other people instead of myself, but I must defer that until another time. If you have not seen it already, I have just now in my hands an original of Sir Alexander Brand's, the crazed Scots knight with the woeful countenance, you would relish. I believe it might make Miss John catch hold of his knees, which I take in him to be a degree of mirth only inferior to falling back again with an elastic spring. It is very printed in the Evening Post, so perhaps you have seen these panegyrics of our declining bard; one on the princess's birthday, the other on his majesty's, in cantos: they are written in the spirit of a complicated craziness.

"I was in London lately a night, and in the old playhouse saw a comedy acted, called 'Love makes a Man, or the Fop's Fortune,' where I beheld Miller and Cibber shine to my infinite entertainment. In and about London this month of September near a hundred people have died by accident and suicide. There was one blacksmith, tired of the hammer, who hanged himself, and left written behind him this concise epitaph,

I, Joe Pope,
Lived without hope,
And died by a rope.

or else some epigrammatic muse has belied him.

"Mr. Muir has ample fund for politics in the present posture of affairs, as you will find by the public news. I should be glad to know that great minister's frame just now. Keep it to yourself. You may whisper it, too, in Miss John's ear: far otherwise is his late mysterious brother Mr. Tait employed,—started a superannuated fortune, and just now upon the full scent. It is comical enough to see him from amongst the rubbish of his controversial divinity and politics, furbishing up his ancient rustic gallantry.

Yours sincerely, J. T.

"Remember me to all friends, Mr. Rickle, Miss John, Brother John, &c."

Thomson's earliest patron in London was Mr. Forbes, afterwards Lord President of the Session; who is thus immortalized in the Seasons,

"Thee, Forbes, too, whom every worth attends,
As truth sincere, as weeping friendship kind,
Thee, truly generous, and in silence great,
Thy country feels through her reviving arts,
Plann'd by thy wisdom, by thy soul inform'd;
And seldom has she known a friend like thee."

Having seen his poetry in Scotland, he received him with kindness, recommended him to his friends, and particularly to Mr. Aikman, a gentleman moving in high society, whose taste for descriptive poetry was generated by his pursuits as a painter. The friendship of Aikman was highly appreciated by Thomson; and on his death, in June 1731, he wrote some verses which are indicative of that fervid attachment for which he was remarkable.

Among other persons to whom he was indebted for countenance and attention were Mr. Mallet, his school fellow, then private tutor to the Duke of Montrose and his Grace's brother Lord George Graham. By Mallet he is supposed to have been introduced to, and made acquainted with, the characters of many brother poets and other wits of the day; and he was assisted by him in negotiating the publication of his first work. He resided, at this time, in Lancaster Court in the Strand.

The poem of Winter, which, reversing the natural order, proved the harbinger of "The Seasons," appeared in folio in March, 1726-7; but it remained unsold till Mr. Whateley, a gentleman of acknowledged taste, and the author of "Observations on Modern Gardening," discerned its beauties, and made them the subject of conversation in the circles in which he visited. Though materially improved in subsequent editions, its merits were sufficiently striking to establish the author's fame; but it is stated that he received no more than three guineas for his labours. It was dedicated to Sir Spencer Compton, then Speaker of the House of Commons, and afterwards Earl of Wilmington, but his motive for selecting him as a patron is unknown; and it would seem, from Aaron Hill's lines, which he affixed to the second edition of "Winter," that he was doubtful to what great person he should address it. In the preface to that edition, which appeared in the same year, he entered into a long defence of poetry, complained of the debasing subjects to which it was chiefly

applied, and contended, in rapturous language, that the works of nature are most calculated to produce poetical enthusiasm. According to the fashion of the time, he prefixed to the second impression some commendatory verses by Hill, Mr. Mallet, and a lady who styled herself Mira.*

Johnson asserts that "Winter" was unnoticed by Sir Spencer Compton until Aaron Hill roused his attention by some verses addressed to Thomson, and published in one of the newspapers, which censured the great for their neglect of ingenious men: but it is obvious, from the verses themselves, that they were written before Thomson had fixed on a patron; and there is nothing to justify the opinion that he was indebted to Hill for Sir Spencer's subsequent notice of him. In a letter addressed to Hill he says:

"I hinted to you in my last, that on Saturday morning I was with Sir Spencer Compton. A certain gentleman, without my desire, spoke to him concerning me; his answer was, that I had never come near him. Then the gentleman put the question, if he desired that I should wait on him? he returned, he did. On this, the gentleman gave me an introductory letter to him. He received me in what they commonly call a civil manner; asked me some common-place questions, and made me a present of twenty guineas. I am very ready to own, that the present was larger than my performance deserved; and shall ascribe it to his generosity, or any other cause, rather than the merit of the address."

"Winter"† was universally read and almost as universally admired, and its reputation produced to the author the acquaintance of several ladies of rank, among whom were the Countess of Hertford, Miss Drelincourt, daughter of the Dean of Armagh, who became Viscountess Primrose, and Mrs. Stanley; but the most valuable effect of that publication was the friendship of Dr. Thomas Rundle, afterwards Bishop of Derry. That learned individual, finding the man to be as estimable as the poet, honoured him with his friendship, promulgated his fame by his encomiums, and by introducing him to Sir Charles, subsequently Lord Chancellor, Talbot, eventually rendered him an important service.

Stimulated by public applause, Thomson next year published his "Summer," the "Poem on the death of Sir Isaac Newton," and his "Britannia." It is said that having been private tutor to Lord Binning, the eldest son of the Earl of Haddington, but at what period has not been ascertained, he was desirous of evincing his gratitude by inscribing "Summer" to that nobleman. Lord Binning, however, generously sacrificed the distinction to his desire of advancing the Poet's interests, and at his lordship's suggestion, it was dedicated to the well known Mr. Bubb Dodington, then a Lord of the Treasury, in that humiliating strain of panegyrie to which, happily, authors no longer submit. Whether the change has been produced by the extinction of patrons, or from a worthier cause, the effect is to rescue literature from the degradation of paying sycophantic homage to titled dullness or aristocratic impertinence; and it is left to societies established for the promotion of science to debase themselves by a fawning deference to rank, which an individual would feel himself disgraced by imitating.

In his eulogy on Newton, Thomson was assisted by his friend Gray, who, being well acquainted with the Newtonian Philosophy, furnished him with a sufficient idea of its principles to enable him to allude to the subject with correctness. "Britannia" owed its existence to the displeasure of the English merchants at the interruption of our trade by the Spaniards in America. Thomson was particularly alive to impressions of public liberty, and eagerly availed himself of a moment of political excitement to indulge his feelings.

In 1728, he published his "Spring," which he inscribed to Frances, Countess of Hertford, wife of Algernon, then Earl of Hertford, afterwards Duke of Somerset. This lady, whose generous intercession in favour of Savage preserved his life, not only patronized poetry, but was herself a votary of the Muses,* and her letters create a very favourable impression both of her heart and her understanding. If the dedication may be relied on, Spring "grew up under her encouragement," and Thomson was one summer the guest of her ladyship at her country seat; but Johnson says he took more pleasure in carousing with her lord

* Dr. Johnson says Mira was the fictitious name of a lady once too well known: Savage addressed verses to her on reading her poems, and Aaron Hill also wrote some lines on her.

† To this edition Thomson added the letters "M. A." to his name, but the distinction was omitted on every other occasion.

* The Countess of Hertford, according to her own admission, was the authoress of the pieces entitled "A Rural Meditation," "A Penitential Thought," "A Midnight Hymn," and "The Dying Christian's Hope," inserted in Watt's Miscellanies, and there assigned to Eusebia. See a letter from her ladyship to Dr. Watts, in February, 1736, printed in the Elegant Epistles, vol. v. p. 525. On the 15th of May, 1748, the Countess of Hertford, in a letter to Lady Luxemborough, noticed Thomson's Castle of Indolence in the following terms:—"I conclude you will read Mr. Thomson's Castle of Indolence. it is after the manner of Spenser; but I think he does not always keep so close to his style as the author of the School Mistress, whose name I never knew till you were so good as to inform me of it. I believe the Castle of Indolence will afford you much entertainment: there are many pretty paintings in it; but I think the wizard's song deserves a preference:

'He needs no muse who dictates from the heart.'"

than in assisting her studies, and therefore was never again invited: a charge which Lord Buchan eagerly repels, but upon as little authority as it was originally made.

Previous to the appearance of "Spring," Thomson issued proposals for publishing the "Four Seasons" by subscription; and in the advertisement, he pledged himself that the separate publication of that poem should not prevent the work being completed in the ensuing winter.

The tragedy of Sophonisba, which was written and acted in 1729, was his next production; and such were the expectations which the author's fame excited, that the rehearsals were attended by splendid audiences: though, if Johnson be correct, nobody was much affected, and the company rose as if from a moral lecture. Among those who honoured the tragedy with particular regard was the Queen, to whom, on that account, it was dedicated; and in the preface the author pleads in extenuation of the errors of the piece, that it was a first attempt: he explains his reasons for choosing that subject, and thanks Mr. Wilks, and more especially Mrs. Oldfield, for their powerful representations of Massinissa and Sophonisba, the latter having, he says, "excelled what even in the fondness of an author he could either wish or imagine."

The success of this tragedy on the stage was not great, though it went through four editions in the year 1730, and Johnson ascribes one cause of its failure to a foolish parody of the silly line, omitted in subsequent impressions,

"Oh, Sophonisba, Sophonisba, O!"

"O Jemmy Thomson, Jemmy Thomson, O!"

which was very generally repeated through the town. Pope, the same writer says, on the assertion of Savage, wrote the first part of the prologue, but, as he could not be persuaded to finish it, the remaining lines were added by Mallet.

The "Seasons" were completed in 1730, when "Autumn," which he addressed to the Right Honourable Arthur Onslow, Speaker of the House of Commons, was first printed. A very material difference exists between "the Seasons" as they first appeared, and as they now stand. From time to time Thomson polished this work with great assiduity and success, perhaps from the anticipation that by it he would be best known to posterity. To this labour he was probably excited by an epistle from Somerville, who asks,

"Why should thy Muse, born so divinely fair,
Want the reforming toilet's daily care!
Dress the gay maid, improve each native grace,
And call forth all the glories of her face:
The accomplish'd nymph in all her best attire,
Courts shall applaud, and prostrate crowds admire;
For kind and wise the parent, who reproves
The slightest blemish in the child he loves.
Read Philips much, consider Milton more,
But from their dross extract the purer ore.
Let perspicuity o'er all preside,—
Soon shalt thou be the nation's joy and pride.

Johnson admits that these revisions improved the poems in general: but he expresses his suspicion that they lost their *race*. A few examples of the benefit which they derived from reflection and criticism prove that this remark displays more ingenuity than taste; and as instances of the difference between early and subsequent editions of a Poet's lucubrations, they are sufficiently curious to deserve the space they will occupy.*

About this time, through the influence of Dr. Rundle, who, on sending Mrs. Sandys a copy of "The Seasons," observed, that it was "a volume on which reason bestows as many beauties as imagination," Thomson was selected by Sir Charles Talbot, then Solicitor General, to accompany his eldest son, Mr. Charles Richard Talbot, on his travels. With this accomplished young man he visited most of the capitals in Europe, in the year 1731. Admitted to the best society wherever they went, unembarrassed by pecuniary considerations, and encouraged by the rising influence and generosity of his patron, to hope for a permanent independence, if not for a situation calculated for the display of talent, this must have been the happiest period of the Poet's life, since nothing more can be desired than youth, fame, health, and competence in possession, with a bright perspective of future renown.

During his absence from England he appears to have kept up a correspondence with Mr. Bubb Dodington, to whom he dedicated his "Spring;" and his letters which tend to show that he was on terms of intimacy with that gentleman are entitled to attention. They justify a more favourable opinion of his epistolary powers than any others which have appeared, and are very interesting from his account of the impression which foreign scenes made on his mind, and of his future intentions with respect to literature.

Paris, Dec. 27, *N. S.* 1730.

"M. de Voltaire's Brutus has been acted here seven or eight times with applause, and still continues to be acted. It is matter of amusement to me to imagine what ideas an old republican, declaiming on liberty, must give the generality of a French audience. Voltaire, in his preface, designs to have a stroke at criticism; and Lord have mercy on the poor similes at the end of the acts in our English plays, for these seem to be very worthy objects of his French indignation. It is designed to be dedicated to Lord Bolingbroke.

"I have seen little of Paris, yet some streets and playhouses; though, had I seen all that is to be

* See the end of "The Seasons."

seen here, you know it too well to need a much better account than I can give. You must, however, give me leave to observe, that amid all the external and showy magnificence which the French affect, one misses that solid magnificence of trade and sincere plenty which not only appear to be, but are, substantially, in a kingdom where industry and liberty mutually support and inspirit each other. That kingdom I suppose I need not mention, as it is and ever will be sufficiently plain from the character. I shall return no worse Englishman than when I came away.

"Your observation I find every day juster and juster, that one may profit more abroad by seeing than by hearing; and yet there are scarce any travellers to be met with, who have given a landscape of the countries through which they have travelled that have seen, as you express it, with the Muses' eye; though that is the first thing which strikes me, and what all readers and travellers in the first place demand. It seems to me, that such a poetical landscape of countries, mixed with moral observations on their countries and people, would not be an ill judged undertaking. But then, the description of the different face of nature, in different countries, must be particularly marked and characteristic, the portrait painting of nature."

Oct. 24, 1731.

"What you observe concerning the pursuit of poetry, so far engaged in it as I am, is certainly just. Besides, let him quit it who can, and 'erit mihi magnus Apollo,' or something as great. A true genius, like light, must be beaming forth, as a false one is an incurable disease. One would not, however, climb Parnassus, any more than your mortal hills, to fix for ever on the barren top. No; it is some little dear retirement in the vale below that gives the right relish to the prospect, which, without that, is nothing but enchantment; and though pleasing for some time, at last leaves us in a desert. The great fat doctor of Bath,* told me that poets should be kept poor, the more to animate their genius. This is like the cruel custom of putting a bird's eye out, that it may sing the sweeter; but, surely, they sing sweetest amid the luxuriant woods, while the full spring blooms around them.

"Travelling has long been my fondest wish, for the very purpose you recommend. The storing one's imagination with ideas all-beautiful, all-great, and all-perfect nature: these are the true materia poetica, the light and colours, with which fancy kindles up her whole creation, paints a sentiment, and even embodies an abstracted thought. I long to see the fields where Virgil gathered his immortal honey, and tread the same ground where men have thought and acted so greatly.

"But not to travel entirely like a poet, I resolve not to neglect the more prosaic advantages of it, for it is no less my ambition to be capable of serving my country in an active, than in a contemplative way. At my times of leisure abroad, I think of attempting another tragedy, and a story more addressed to common passions than 'Sophonisba.' The Sophonisba people now-a-days must have something like themselves, and a public spirited monster can never interest them. If any thing could make me capable of an epic performance, it would be your favourable opinion in thinking so. But, as you justly observe, that must be the work of years, and one must be in an epic situation to execute it. My heart both trembles with diffidence, and burns with ardour at the thought. The story of Timoleon is good as to the subject matter, but an author owes, I think, the scene of an epic action to his own country; besides, Timoleon admits of no machinery except that of the heathen gods, which will not do at this time of day. I hope, hereafter, to have the direction of your taste in these affairs; and in the mean time will endeavour to expand those ideas and sentiments, and in some degree to gather up that knowledge which is necessary to such an undertaking.

"Should the scenes and climates through which I pass inspire me with any poetry, it will naturally have recourse to you. But to hint a return from Young or Stubbs were a kind of poetical simony, especially when you yourself possess such a portion of the spirit."

Rome, Nov. 28. 1731.

"I will make no apology for neglecting to do myself the honour of writing to you since we left Paris. I may rather plead a merit in not troubling you with long scrawls of that travelling stuff, of which the world is full, even to loathing. That enthusiasm which I had upon me, with regard to travelling, goes off, I find, very fast. One may imagine fine things in reading ancient authors; but to travel is to dissipate that vision. A great many antique statues, where several of the fair ideas of Greece are fixed for ever in marble, and the paintings of the first masters, are, indeed, most enchanting objects. How little, however, of these suffices! How unessential to life! they are, surely, not of that importance as to set the whole world, man, woman, and child, a-gadding. I should be sorry to be Goth enough to think them highly ornamental in life, when one can have them at home without paying for them at an extravagant price. But for every one who can support it to make a trade of running abroad only to stare at them, I can not help thinking something worse than a public folly. Instead of travelling so furiously, it

* Query, Dr. Cheyne?

were wiser and more public spirited should they, with part of those sums of money spent that way, send persons of genius in architecture, painting, and sculpture, to study those arts abroad, and import them into England. Did they but once take root here, how they might flourish in such a generous and wealthy country! The nature of the great painter, architect, and statuary, is the same she ever was; and is no doubt as profuse of beauty, proportion, lovely forms, and real genius, as formerly she was to the sunny realms of Greece, did we but study the one and exert the other. In England, if we can not reach the gracefully superfluous, yet I hope we shall never lose the substantial, necessary, and vital arts of life; such as depend on labour, liberty, and all commanding trade. For my part, I, who have no taste for smelling to an old musty stone, look upon those countries with an eye to poetry, in regard that the sisters reflect light and images to one another. Now I mention poetry, should you inquire after my muse, all that I can answer is, that I believe she did not cross the channel with me. I know not whether your gardener at Eastbery has heard any thing of her among the woods there; she has not thought fit to visit me while I have been in this once poetic land, nor do I feel the least presage that she will. But not to lengthen out a letter that has no pretence to entertain you, give me leave only to add, that I can never lose the pleasing sense I have of your goodness to me; and it is a hope that I must flatter myself with your continuance of it upon my return to England; for which my veneration and love, I will be vain enough to say, increase every day, even to fondness and devotion."

Thomson returned to England in 1732, with his general information much increased, and his opinion of mankind considerably enlarged. New scenes rather excited than lessened his poetic ardour; and no sooner was he settled than he resumed his pen, choosing for his subject "Liberty."

It has been erroneously supposed by every biographer of Thomson, that immediately on his return he obtained the sinecure situation of Secretary of Briefs in the Court of Chancery, and that soon after he commenced his poem his young friend Mr. Talbot died. The slightest attention to dates will show the error of these statements. Sir Charles Talbot did not become Chancellor until the 29th of November, 1733, shortly before which time Mr. Talbot died; so that in fact "Liberty" must have been nearly finished before his decease, and he did not live to witness the service which his father conferred on Thomson by appointing him to the office alluded to. The truth then appears to be, that actuated either by gratitude to his patron, or by regard for his accomplished son, or probably by both feelings, the Poet resolved to evince his respect for the living and the dead, by prefixing to the first part of "Liberty" an address which should commemorate their worth and his esteem. Mr. Talbot died in his twenty-fourth year, and Thomson's eulogy of him is marked by simplicity and tenderness.

Though the most laboured, and in its author's opinion the best of his productions, "Liberty" was never popular, and perhaps most persons have found it as difficult to read to an end as Dr. Johnson did, who eagerly avails himself of the neglect with which it was treated to indulge in one of those sneers which render his account of Thomson a memorial of his want of candour and injustice. It was inscribed to Frederick, Prince of Wales, and probably enabled Mr. Lyttleton to introduce him to the notice of his Royal Highness. However grieved at the coldness of the public towards his favourite work, and that he felt it severely is beyond a doubt, one at least of his friends gave him every consolation which the most extravagant praises can afford. That exquisite flatterer, Aaron Hill, whose taste and judgment gave zest to his eulogy, thus wrote to Thomson on the 17th of February, 1734; and it is amusing to compare the opinion of a distinguished contemporary with that of posterity on the same subject.

"DEAR SIR,

"You have lately given me two pleasures; for one of them I am indebted to fortune, who brought me near you, though not quite near enough, the other night, at the playhouse. The second I owe to a hand, I am infinitely more proud to be obliged by; for I received your beautiful present of Liberty from its author. It will be, in all senses, an ornament to my study. It will, also, be such to my heart and my memory; for I shall never be able to think of a loveliness in moral, a frankness in social, or a penetration in political life, to which you have not, in this inimitable masterpiece, both of language and genius, given a force, and a delicacy, which few shall be born with a capacity to feel, and none ever with a capacity to exceed.

"I do not know a pleasure I should enjoy with more pride than that of filling up the leisure of a well employed year, in exerting the critic, on your poem; in considering it first, with a view to the vastness of its conception, in the general plan; secondly, to the grandeur, the depth, the unleaning, self-supported richness of the sentiments; and thirdly, to the strength, the elegance, the music, the comprehensive living energy, and close propriety of your expression. I look upon this mighty work as the last stretched blaze of our expiring genius. It is the dying effort of despairing and indignant virtue, and will stand, like one of those immortal pyramids, which carry their mag-

nificence through times that wonder to see nothing round them but uncomfortable desert!

"Yet you must give me leave, while I but admire your genius, to love your soul, that has such compass of humanity! your poem is not newer than your mind, nor your expression stronger than your virtue. Whatever school-enthusiasm has misdreamt of Homer, that he knew all arts, and that his works have taught their practice, might be almost said and proved of Mr. Thomson's 'Liberty,' without partiality or flattery; whatever has been suffered, done, or thought, through all the revolutions of forgotten time, your more than magic muse revokes, reacts, and animates, till we become cotemporaries of every busy age, and see, and feel the changes, which they shone or sunk by.

"It is possible that this devoted nation, irrecoverably lost in luxury, may, like your

——Little artists form,
On higher life intent, its silken tomb.

It may rise to future animation, and, its wealth, its pride, and commerce lost, lose also its corruption, and retriumph, in the strength of undesiring poverty. For, certainly, you have detected the sole root of every English evil you deplore so beautifully:

Whenever puff'd with power, and gorged with wealth,
Nations, like ours, let trade enormous rise,
And east and south their mingled treasure pour;
Then, swell'd impetuous, the corrupting flood
Bursts o'er the city, and devours the land.

"Think, seriously, upon this observation, and try if, in all your acquaintance with past ages, you can find a people long at once retaining public virtue and extended commerce. Search, too, as much in vain for one who is, with warmer truth, and better founded zeal, than I am,

Dear sir, your most obedient
And most humble servant,
A. Hill."

In another letter, dated in the following January, Hill pointed out some slight defects in "Liberty;" and in September, 1735, after referring to a copy of "Zara," which he submitted for Thomson's perusal, he observed, "The warmth you express against the corruption and degeneracy of our stage is an indignation both natural and necessary in a breast—

'The bounds of self divinely bursting!'

yet fain would I hope, it is not in the prophetic spirit of the character, that a poet, like you, asserts, 'The root of this evil is too deep to be pluck'd up;'" and he then approves, with the bitterness of a disappointed autnor, of the anathema which Thomson had pronounced against the dramatic taste of the time. On the same occasion he suggested the establishment of a tragic academy, and asked him if he thought the Prince of Wales would give his support to the plan:—a remark indicative of Thomson's being sufficiently connected with the Prince to be aware of his sentiments. A letter from Hill in May 1736, proves that in consequence of the failure of "Liberty" as a speculation, the author generously resolved to secure the publisher from loss:

"One of the natural growths of such a mind, as we see in your writings, is the generosity of your purpose, in favour of the bookseller. I am in love with the humanity that inspired such a sentiment; but, for the sake of my country, wish it may never be carried into execution, because the beauty of the action would, of necessity, prevent its ever being forgotten; and a kind of national infamy, which must disgrace us to posterity, will, as infallibly, be a consequence ofits being remembered.

"I confess myself sincerely mortified to hear that such a poem as 'Liberty,' in such a nation as Great Britain, can have failed to make a bookseller as rich as an ungrateful people have been made by its invaluable fund of manly sentiments; but there are dispositions, in political as well as natural bodies, which have prevalence to help or hinder the effect of medicines: and I am apprehensive, that republican improvements upon monarchical foundations will but spoil two different orders, either of which, alone, might have had strength and gracefulness."

He proceeds to comply with Thomson's request, to send him his criticisms in the event of a second edition; and it appears from this letter, that he had complained that the works of authors were not secured to them, as Hill says,

"Would to God you were in the right, in that part of your letter which wishes, in lieu of state patronage, in favour of learning, that we had only some good act of parliament for securing to authors the property of their own works. Methinks if the act would go deep enough to reach the very root of your wish, it should, also, secure to the public the education of her gentlemen as well as the property of her writers; since, where the first are unable to taste, the last must write to no purpose."

Two other paragraphs in this communication refer to Thomson's acquaintance with eminent poets of the day:

"I am pleased to hear that Mr. Pope was so kind as to make any inquiries concerning me. Your good nature was justly and generously employed in the mention you make of poor Mr. Savage."

The remarks of Johnson on the alteration and curtailment made by Lord Lyttelton in "Liberty," are too just not to produce conviction, and in this

edition, as well as most others, his wish to see it exhibited as its author left it is realised.

A letter which the Poet wrote to his friend Mr. Ross about this period displays the affection which he bore to his relations, and proves his readiness to contribute to their support. The tragedy to which he alludes was "Agamemnon."

"DEAR ROSS, *London, Nov.* 6, 1736.

I own I have a good deal of assurance, after asking one favour of you, never to answer your letter till I ask another. But not to mince the matter, and all apologies apart, hearken to my request.—My sisters have been advised by their friends to set up at Edinburgh a little milliner's shop; and if you can conveniently advance to them twelve pounds, on my account, it will be a particular favour. That will set them a-going, and I design from time to time to send them goods from hence. My whole account I will pay you when you come up here, not in poetical paper credit, but in the solid money of this dirty world. I will not draw upon you, in case you be not prepared to defend yourself; but if your purse be valiant, please to inquire for Jean or Elizabeth Thomson, at the Reverend Mr. Gusthart's; and if this letter be not a sufficient testimony of the debt, I will send you whatever you desire.

"It is late, and I would not lose this post. Like a laconic man of business, therefore, I must here stop short; though I have several things to impart to you, and, through your canal, to the dearest, truest, heartiest youth that treads on Scottish ground. The next letter I write you shall be washed clean from business in the Castalian fountain.

"I am whipping and spurring to finish a tragedy for you this winter, but am still at some distance from the goal, which makes me fear being distanced. Remember me to all friends, and above them all to Mr. Forbes. Though my affection to him is not fanned by letters, yet is it as high as when I was his brother in the virtu, and played at chess with him in a post-chaise.

I am, dear Ross,
Most sincerely and affectionately yours,
JAMES THOMSON."

On the 12th of the following January, he again wrote to Ross.

"Having been entirely in the country of late, finishing my play, I did not receive yours till some days ago. It was kind in you not to draw rashly upon me, which at present had put me into danger; but very soon, that is to say about two months hence, I shall have a golden buckler, and you may draw boldly. My play is received in Drury Lane, and will be put into my Lord Chamberlain's or his deputy's hands to-morrow. Petty* came here two or three days ago; I have not yet seen the round man of God to be. He is to be parsonified a few days hence. How a gown and cassock will become him; and with what a holy leer he will edify the devout females! There is no doubt of his having a call, for he is immediately to enter upon a tolerable living. God grant him more, and as fat as himself. It rejoices me to see some one worthy, honest, excellent man raised, at least, to independence. Pray make my compliments to my Lord President,† and all friends. I shall be glad to hear more at large from you. Just now I am with the Alderman, who wishes you all happiness."

His sisters and his forthcoming tragedy appear still to have divided his thoughts, for in February he thus wrote about both to Mr. Gavin Hamilton:

"I lately heard from my sisters at Edinburgh, that you were so good as to promise to advance to them, on my account, a trifle of money, which I proposed to allow them yearly. The sum is sixteen pounds sterling, and which I would have paid them eight pounds sterling at Martinmas, and the other eight pounds at Whitsuntide, the payment to begin from last Martinmas. So that the first year will be completed at Whitsunday next. Your doing this I shall look upon as a particular favour, and the money shall be paid here at your order as you please to direct. Please, upon receipt of this, to send to them at Mr. Gusthart's and to advance to them the payment for last Martinmas, which place to my account. Had I had time this post, I would have written to them to wait upon you. I have a tragedy, entitled Agamemnon, to be represented here about three weeks hence. Please to let me know how many copies I shall send to you, and you shall have them in full time. I have some thoughts of printing it for myself, but if I do not, I will take care you shall have what copies of it you demand. If I can serve you in any thing else here, I shall be very glad."

In 1736, he was one of the committee of managers of the Society for the Encouragement of Learning, his colleagues being either persons of high rank or of considerable literary reputation.

Thomson's next work originated in gratitude. His constant and generous patron, Lord Chancellor Talbot, died in February 1737, and soon afterwards, the beautiful poem to his memory appeared. Pieces of this nature, however creditable

* "Petty," thus spoken of, was Dr. Patrick Murdoch, the "oily man of God" of the "Castle of Indolence," and one of Thomson's biographers and editors.

† Duncan Forbes.

the feelings may be which inspired them, must possess extraordinary intrinsic merit to create interest when all remembrance of the individual whom they celebrate has passed away. This claim is possessed by the article in question, and the same reader who turns from the cold and formal, though elegant versification of "Liberty," if he commence the tribute to Lord Talbot, will be induced to go on; and should he not think himself repaid by any other passage, he will be amply gratified by the description of the delicate species of patronage which it is ît for wealth or greatness to bestow.

"Let learning, arts, let universal worth,
Lament a patron lost, a friend and judge.
Unlike the sons of vanity, that, veil'd
Beneath the patron's prostituted name,
Dare sacrifice a worthy man to pride,
And flush confusion o'er an honest cheek.
When he conferr'd a grace, it seem'd a debt
Which he to merit, to the public, paid,
And to the great all-bounteous Source of Good.
His sympathising heart itself received
The generous obligation he bestow'd.
This, this indeed, is patronising worth.
Their kind protector him the Muses own,
But scorn with noble pride the boasted aid
Of tasteless Vanity's insulting hand.
The gracious stream that cheers the lettered world,
Is not the noisy gift of summer's noon,
Whose sudden current, from the naked root,
Washes the little soil which yet remained,
And only more dejects the blushing flowers:
No, 'tis the soft descending dews at eve,
The silent treasures of the vernal year,
Indulging deep their stores, the still night long;
Till, with returning morn, the freshen'd world
Is fragrance all, all beauty, joy, and song."

The opportunity is also taken to defend Bishop Rundle, his early patron and the confidential friend of the chancellor, who incurred the suspicion of heresy, and it is not too much to say, that whilst this piece does honour to the virtues of his heart, it elevates his character as a poet.

His motive for perpetuating the fame of Lord Talbot was wholly disinterested: it was, indeed, a pure offering to that setting sun on whose rays depended all the brightness of his own prospects. With the chancellor he lost the situation which rendered him independent; and though Lord Hardwicke, Talbot's successor, is said to have kept the office open in expectation that Thomson would apply for it, he failed to do so, and it was given to another. From what this neglect of his interests arose must be left to conjecture. It is said that he was listless and indifferent: but he may perhaps have fancied that his eminence was sufficiently great to have induced the new chancellor to offer what his lordship imagined would have been sought, and possibly the Poet was deprived of the office from a mistaken pride on both sides. He might, however, without meanness, have asked to retain what he already possessed, and the other might have had the urbanity to offer to continue that which it was ungenerous to take away; but he who, trusting to the merit of his works, suffers himself to believe that they will procure him that courtesy from rank which in England is reserved for those possessed of wealth, birth, or political influence, will find himself fatally mistaken, and like Thomson will have cause to deplore his error.

This change in his condition did not however impair his energies or depress his spirits, nor did he alter his manner of living, trusting probably to the sale of his writings to supply his wants. The loss of his situation as Secretary of Briefs renders it probable that it was about this period when he was arrested for debt, and was rescued from a spunging house by Quin, the well known actor. The anecdote is highly creditable to both parties, and is deserving of being recorded, as the origin of a friendship betweeen two distinguished persons, which ended only with their lives; and because it contradicts the aphorism, that a pecuniary obligation is generally repaid by ingratitude.

On learning that Thomson was confined for a debt of about seventy pounds, Quin repaired to the house, and having inquired for, was introduced to him. Thomson was a good deal disconcerted at seeing Quin in such a place, and his embarrassment increased when Quin told him he was come to sup with him, being conscious that all the money he was possessed of would scarce procure a good one, and that credit was out of the question. His anxiety was however removed upon Quin's informing him that, as he supposed it would have been inconvenient to have had the supper dressed in the place they were in, he had ordered it from an adjacent tavern, and as a prelude half a dozen of claret was introduced. Supper being over, Quin said, "It is time now, Jemmy Thomson, we should balance accounts." This not a little astonished the poet, who imagined he had some demand upon him; but Quin, perceiving it, continued, "Sir, the pleasure I have had in perusing your works, I can not estimate at less than a hundred pounds, and I insist upon taking this opportunity of acquitting myself of the debt." On saying this, he put down a note of that value, and hastily took his leave, without waiting for a reply.

The most valuable acquaintance which Thomson ever formed was with Mr., afterwards the celebrated Lord Lyttelton, whom Pope has described as being

Still true to virtue and as warm as true,

but the precise time or manner of its commencement is no where mentioned. Murdoch says Lyttelton presented him to the Prince of Wales before he was personally known to him; and John-

son states that this occurred after he lost his situation of Secretary of Briefs, which was early in 1737. On being introduced, his Royal Highness inquired into the state of his affairs, and Thomson having answered that "they were in a more poetical posture than formerly," the prince granted him a pension of 100*l.* a year, but of which he lived to be deprived.

In 1738 Agamemnon appeared, but its reception was far from favourable; and a ludicrous story is told of Thomson's agony at witnessing the representation, on the first night, being so great, as to oblige him to excuse his delay in meeting the friends with whom he had promised to sup, saying that his wig had been so disordered by perspiration that he could not appear until he had submitted to the hands of the hair-dresser. It is said, too, that such was his excitement upon the occasion, that he audibly accompanied the actors in their recitation, until a friend reminded him of the indiscretion. Pope was present at its appearance, and was honoured by the audience with a general clap, a mark of approbation which, though not uncommon in other countries, is rarely evinced by an English audience to a man who is merely a poet. Agamemnon was inscribed to the Princess of Wales, in a dedication which is good because it is short, and free from the fulsome panegyrics common to such addresses. The prologue was furnished by Mallet; the epilogue, which from not being assigned to any other author, may in its present form be considered Thomson's own, is remarkable for being altered after the first representation; and in all the editions of the play a note occurs, stating that the whole, excepting the six lines with which it commences, "being very justly disliked by the audience, another was substituted in its place." Whether the original epilogue was written by him is doubtful, and it would seem from the substituted lines, that those which gave place to it were obnoxious from their indelicacy. With much tact he hails their rejection as an indication of a better taste:

> "Thus he began:—And you approved the strain;
> Till the next couplet sunk to light and vain.
> You check'd him there.—To you, to reason just,
> He owns he triumph'd in your kind disgust.
> Charm'd by your frown, by your displeasure graced,
> He hails the rising virtue of your taste;"

and he concluded with congratulating them on the improvement.

Shortly before Agamemnon was produced, Dr. Rundle thus wrote to Mrs. Sandys, whence it appears that lady had suggested a subject for a play to him, which he once intended to adopt.

"My friend Thomson, the poet, is bringing another untoward heroine on the stage, and has deferred writing on the subject you chose for him, though he had the whole scheme drawn out into acts and scenes, proper turns of passion and sentiments pointed out to him, and the distress made as touching and important, as new, and interesting, and regular, as any that was ever introduced on the stage at Athens, for the instruction of that polite nation. But, perhaps the delicacy of the subject, and the judgment required in saying bold truths, whose boldness should not make them degenerate into offensiveness, deterred him. His present story is the death of Agamemnon. An adulteress, who murders her husband, is but an odd example to be presented before, and admonish the beauties of Great Britain. However, if he will be advised, it shall not be a shocking, though it can not be a noble story. He will enrich it with a profusion of worthy sentiments and high poetry, but it will be written in a rough, harsh style, and in numbers great, but careless. He wants that neatness and simplicity of diction which is so natural in dialogue. He can not throw the light of an elegant ease on his thoughts, which will make the sublimest turns of art appear the genuine unpremeditated dictates of the heart of the speaker. But with all his faults, he will have a thousand masterly strokes of a great genius seen in all he writes; and he will be applauded by those who most censure him."

In the ensuing year, 1739, his play entitled Edward and Eleanora was offered to the stage, but was prohibited from being represented. To understand this measure, it is necessary to allude to the politics of the period. The heir apparent, Frederick, Prince of Wales, lived in open hostility to his father George the Second; his house was the rendezvous of the opposition, and as the advocate of liberal opinions he was the idol of the whigs and other discontented persons. The plot of Edward and Eleanora is derived from the well known story of Eleanor of Castile, the wife of King Edward the First, having preserved her husband's life in the Holy Land by sucking the poison from his wound. As Edward was then heir apparent to the crown, he stood in the same position as the Prince of Wales; and Thomson availed himself of the circumstance to introduce some passages calculated to strengthen the prince's popularity by encouraging the people to hope for his accession. Of these the most striking are:

> "Edward, return; lose not a day, an hour,
> Before this city. Though your cause be holy,
> Believe me, 'tis a much more pious office,
> To save your father's old and broken years,
> His mild and easy temper, from the snares
> Of low, corrupt, insinuating traitors:
> A nobler office far! on the firm base
> Of well proportion'd liberty, to build
> The common quiet, happiness, and glory
> Of king and people, England's rising grandeur
> To you, my Prince, this task, of right, belongs.
> Has not the royal heir a juster claim

To share his father's inmost heart and counsels,
Than aliens to his interest, those, who make
A property, a market of his honour?"

"Edward has great, has amiable virtues;
That virtue chiefly which befits a prince—
He loves the people he must one day rule;
With fondness loves them, with a noble pride;
Esteems their good, esteems their glory his."

"Amidst his many virtues, youthful Edward
Is lofty, warm, and absolute of temper;
I therefore seek to moderate his heat,
To guide his fiery virtues, that, misled
By dazzling power and flattering sycophants,
Might finish what his father's weaker measures
Have tried in vain. And hence I here attend him.
O save our country, Edward! save a nation,
The chosen land, the last retreat of freedom,
Amidst a world enslaved!—Cast back thy view,
And trace from farthest times her old renown:
Think of the blood that, to maintain her rights,
And guard her sheltering laws, has flow'd in battle,
Or on the patriot's scaffold: think what cares,
What vigilance, what toils, what bright contention,
In councils, camps, and well disputed senates,
It cost our generous ancestors, to raise
A matchless plea of freedom: whence we shine,
Even in the jealous eye of hostile nations,
The happiest of mankind.—Then see all this,
This virtue, wisdom, toil, and blood of ages,
Behold it ready to be lost for ever.
In this important, this decisive hour,
On thee, and thee alone, our weeping country
Turns her distressful eye; to thee she calls,
And with a helpless parent's piercing voice."

Edward is made to say, in reply,

"O, there is nothing, which for thee, my country,
I, in my proper person, could not suffer!"

Many other political allusions occur, which it was impossible not to understand, and when understood not to apply; hence the suppression of the piece was neither surprising nor unreasonable.* The remark of Johnson that it was difficult to discover why the play was not allowed to be acted, proves that he never read Thomson's works with the attention which was incumbent upon his biographer. It was, however, printed with a dedication to the Princess of Wales, the moderation of which is its chief merit. He says,

"In the character of Eleanora I have endeavoured to represent, however faintly, a princess distinguished for all the virtues that render greatness amiable. I have aimed, particularly, to do justice to her inviolable affection and generous tenderness for a prince, who was the darling of a great and free people. Their descendants, even now, will own with pleasure how properly this address is made to your Royal Highness."

The loss of whatever fame and profit he may have anticipated in consequence of the prohibition of this tragedy, was more than made up by the sympathy of the public. To the latter he appeared in a light which never fails to render an Englishman attractive, that of a sufferer for the sake of freedom, and an injured patriot! Johnson states that he endeavoured to repair his pecuniary loss by a subscription, but he says that he can not tell its success. Upon the same authority it is related, that "when the public murmured at the unkind treatment of Thomson, one of the ministerial writers remarked, that he had taken a 'liberty' which was not agreeable to Britannia in any season."

From this time until 1745 Thomson did little excepting that about the year 1740 he wrote his "Masque of Alfred," in conjunction with his friend Mallet. This was composed by command of the Prince of Wales for the entertainment of his household at his summer residence, and was performed at the gardens in Clifden on the 1st of August, 1740, before a brilliant audience, consisting of their Royal Highnesses, the Prince and Princess of Wales and their whole suite. This piece, with alterations and new music, was some years afterwards acted at Covent Garden.*

Three letters which Thomson wrote in the year 1742, when he was residing in Kew Lane, have been printed. Two of them are addressed to Mrs. Robertson, the sister of Miss Young, to whom he was warmly attached, and whose beauty and merits he repeatedly celebrated under the name of Amanda. Those ladies had gone to Bath for their health, and Thomson laments the loss of their society in a lively style: a passage in one of them, in which he speaks of Mrs. Robertson's child, in reference to Miss Young, is worth extracting:

"I can not help telling you of a very pleasing scene I lately saw.—In the middle of a green field there stands a peaceful lowly habitation; into

* Murdoch says, "This refusal drew after it another; and in a way which, as it is related, was rather ludicrous. Mr. Paterson, a companion of Mr. Thomson, afterwards his deputy and then his successor in the general-surveyorship, used to write out fair copies for his friend, when such were wanted for the press or for the stage. This gentleman likewise courted the tragic muse; and had taken for his subject the story of Arminius the German hero. But his play, guiltless as it was, being presented for a license, no sooner had the censor cast his eyes on the hand-writing in which he had seen Edward and Eleanora, than he cried out, 'Away with it!' and the author's profits were reduced to what his bookseller could afford for a tragedy in distress."

* It was entirely new modelled by Mallet, no part of the first being retained except a few lines. It was acted at Drury Lane, and published in 8vo. in 1751. Though excellently performed, it was not very successful. The prologue was written by the Earl of Corke. It has been said, that Mallet procured Alfred to be performed at Drury Lane, by insinuating to Garrick, that, in his intended Life of the Duke of Marlborough, he should, by an ingenious device, find a niche for the Roscius of the age. "My dear friend," said Garrick, "have you quite left off writing for the stage?" The hint was taken, and Alfred was produced.—*Biographia Dramatica.*

which having entered, I beheld innocence, sweet innocence, asleep. Your heart would have yearned, your eyes perhaps have overflowed with tears of joy, to see how charming he looked; like a young cherub dropped from heaven, if they be so happy as to have young cherubs there.

"When awaked, it is not to be imagined with what complacency and ease, what soft serenity altogether unmixed with the least cloud, he opened his eyes. Dancing with joy in his nurse's arms, his eyes not only smiled, but laughed, which put me in mind of a certain near relation of his, whom I need not name. What delights thee so, thou lovely babe? art thou thinking of thy mother's recovery? does some kind power impress upon thee a presage of thy future happiness under her tender care?—I took the liberty to touch him with unhallowed lips, which restored me to the good opinion of the nurse, who had neither forgot nor forgiven my having slighted that favour once."

This letter contained a song, which will be found in the second volume. Another letter is here given at length, from its being the only attempt of a humorous nature in prose which Thomson is known to have made, and the manner in which he satirizes travellers and courtiers is amusing.

To a Friend, on his Travels.

"Trusty and well beloved Dog, *Dec.* 7, 1742.

"Hearing you are gone abroad to see the world, as they call it, I can not forbear, upon this occasion, transmitting you a few thoughts.

"It may seem presumption in me to pretend to give you any instruction; but you must know, that I am a dog of considerable experience. Indeed I have not improved so much as I might have done by my justly deserved misfortunes: the case very often of my betters. However, a little I have learned; and sometimes, while I seemed to lie asleep before the fire, I have overheard the conversation of your travellers. In the first place, I will not suppose that you are gone abroad an illiterate cub, just escaped from the lash of your keeper, and running wild about the world like a dog who has lost his master, utterly unacquainted with the proper knowledge, manners, and conversation of dogs.

"These are the public jests of every country through which they run post, and frequently they are avoided as if they were mad dogs. None will converse with them but those who shear, sometimes even skin them, and often they return home like a dog who has lost his tail. In short, these travelling puppies do nothing else but run after foreign bitches, learn to dance, cut capers, play tricks, and admire your fine outlandish howling; though, in my opinion, our vigorous deep mouthed British note is better music. If a timely stop is not put to this, the genuine breed of our ancient sturdy dogs will by degrees dwindle and degenerate into dull Dutch mastiffs, effeminate Italian lapdogs, or tawdry impertinent French harlequins. All our once noble throated guardians of the house and fold will be succeeded by a mean courtly race, that snarl at honest men, flatter rogues, proudly wear badges of slavery, ribands, collars, &c. and fetch and carry sticks at the lion's court. By the by, my dear Marquis, this fetching and carrying of sticks is a diversion you are too much addicted to, and, though a diversion, unbecoming a true independent country dog. There is another dog vice that greatly prevails among the hungry whelps at court, but you are too well stuffed to fall into that. What I mean is patting, pawing, soliciting, teasing, snapping the morsel out of one another's mouths, being bitterly envious, and insatiably ravenous, nay, sometimes filching when they safely may. Of this vice, I have an instance continually before my eyes, in that wretched animal Scrub, whose genius is quite misplaced here in the country. He has, besides, such an admirable talent at scratching at a door, as might well recommend him to the office of a court waiter. A word in your ear—I wish a certain two-legged friend of mine had a little of this assiduity. These canine courtiers are also extremely given to bark at merit and virtue, if ill clad and poor: they have likewise a nice discernment with regard to those whom their master distinguishes; to such you shall see them go up immediately, and fawning in the most abject manner—*baiser leur cul.* For me, it is always a maxim

> To honour humble worth, and, scorning state,
> P— on the proud inhospitable gate.

For which reason I go scattering my water every where about Richmond. And now that I am upon this topic, I must cite you two lines of a letter from Bounce, of celebrated memory, to Fop, a dog in the country to a dog at court. She is giving an account of her generous offspring, among which she mentions two, far above the vice I now censure:

> One ushers friends to Bathurst's door,
> One fawns at Oxford's on the poor.

Charming dogs! I have little more to say; but only, considering the great mart of scandal you are at, to warn you against flattering those you converse with, and the moment they turn to go away, backbiting them—a vice with which the old dogs of old ladies are much infected; and you must have been most furiously affected with it here at Richmond, had you not happened into a good family: therefore I might have spared this caution. One thing I had almost forgot. You have a base custom, when you chance upon a certain fragrant

exuvium, of perfuming your carcass with it. Fie! fie! leave that nasty custom to your little, foppish, crop-eared dogs, who do it to conceal their own stink.

"My letter, I fear, grows tedious. I will detain you from your slumbers no longer, but conclude by wishing that the waters and exercise may bring down your fat sides, and that you may return a genteel accomplished dog. Pray lick for me, you happy dog, the hands of the fair ladies you have the honour to attend. I remember to have had that happiness once, when one who shall be nameless looked with an envious eye upon me.

"Farewell, my dear marquis. Return, I beg it of you, soon to Richmond; when I will treat you with some choice fragments, a marrowbone, which I will crack for you myself, and a dessert of high toasted cheese. I am, without further ceremony, yours sincerely, BUFF.

"Mi Dewti too Marki. X Scrub's mark."

In a letter which Thomson wrote Mr. Lyttelton, in July, 1743, he says he was employed in correcting "The Seasons:" at that time, it seems, he had never been at Hagley, his friend's seat, in Worcestershire.

DEAR SIR, *London, July* 14, 1743.

I had the pleasure of yours some posts ago, and have delayed answering it hitherto that I might be able to determine when I could have the happiness of waiting upon you. Hagley is the place in England I most desire to see; I imagine it to be greatly delightful in itself, and I know it to be so to the highest degree by the company it is animated with. Some reasons prevent my waiting upon you immediately, but, if you will be so good as let me know how long you design to stay in the country, nothing shall hinder me from passing three weeks or a month with you before you leave it. As this will fall in Autumn, I shall like it the better, for I think that season of the year the most pleasing and the most poetical. The spirits are not then dissipated with the gaiety of Spring, and the glaring light of summer, but composed into a serious and tempered joy. The year is perfect. In the mean time I will go on with correcting The Seasons, and hope to carry down more than one of them with me. The muses, whom you obligingly say I shall bring along with me, I shall find with you—the muses of the great simple country, not the little, fine-lady muses of Richmond Hill.

"I have lived so long in the noise, or at least its distant din of the town, that I begin to forget what retirement is: with you I shall enjoy it in its highest elegance and purest simplicity. The mind will not only be soothed into peace, but enlivened into harmony. My compliments attend all at Hagley, and particularly her who gives it charms to you it never had before.

Believe me to be ever, with the greatest respect,
Most affectionately yours,
JAMES THOMSON."

In 1745 his Tancred and Sigismunda was performed at Drury Lane with considerable applause, and he again found a patron in the Prince of Wales, to whom he says, in the dedication, "Allow me only to wish, that what I have now the honour to offer to your Royal Highness may be judged not unworthy of your protection, at least in the sentiments which it inculcates. A warm and grateful sense of your goodness to me makes me desirous to seize every occasion of declaring in public my profound respect and dutiful attachment."

During the year 1744 Mr. Lyttelton came into office, and the earliest exercise of his patronage was to bestow on Thomson the situation of surveyor general of the Leeward Islands, the duties of which appointment he performed, by deputy, and of which the profits were 300*l.* a year. He was thus placed above want, if he was not elevated to affluence, and this piece of good fortune must have been the more grateful since he was indebted for it to a friendship produced by his own merits.

Much of the Summer of 1745, and the Autumn of 1746, were passed at the Leasowes, with Shenstone; who, after his death, placed the following inscription in Virgil's grove there in commemoration of him.

Celeberrimo Poetæ,
Jacobo Thomson,
Prope fontes ille non fastiditos
G. S.
Sedem hanc ornavit.

"Quæ tibi, quæ tali reddam pro carmine dona?
Nam neque me tantum venientis sibilus austri,
Nec percussa juvant fluctu tam littora, nec quæ
Saxosas inter decurrunt flumina valles."*

Thomson once more experienced the uncertainty of patronage by the loss of the pension of 100*l.* a year, which the Prince of Wales had granted him. This it would seem, from a passage in a letter to his friend Paterson, 1748, arose from Mr.

* To the much celebrated Poet,
James Thomson,
This seat was placed
near his favourite springs
by
W. S.

How shall I thank thy Muse, so form'd to please?
For not the whisperings of the southern breeze,
Nor banks still beaten by the breaking wave,
Nor limpid rills that pebbly vallies lave,
Yield such delight.

Lyttelton, whose influence obtained it for him, having incurred the Prince's displeasure. West and Mallet, both friends of that noble minded individual, and who were similarly favoured with pensions, were deprived of them on the same day and for the same reason.

Whilst at Hagley, Mr. Lyttelton's seat, in October, 1747, he wrote to his sister, Mrs. Thomson, and, as it is the last to his family which has been preserved, it will be read with interest. Dr. Johnson received it from Boswell to whom that lady presented it.

Hagley, in Worcestershire,
October the 4th, 1747.

"MY DEAR SISTER,

I thought you had known me better than to interpret my silence into a decay of affection, especially as your behaviour has always been such as rather to increase than diminish it. Do not imagine, because I am a bad correspondent, that I can ever prove an unkind friend and brother. I must do myself the justice to tell you, that my affections are naturally very fixed and constant; and if I had ever reason of complaint against you, of which, by the by, I have not the least shadow, I am conscious of so many defects in myself, as dispose me to be not a little charitable and forgiving.

"It gives me the truest heartfelt satisfaction to hear you have a good, kind husband, and are in easy, contented circumstances; but were they otherwise, that would only awaken and heighten my tenderness towards you. As our good and tender-hearted parents did not live to receive any material testimonies of that highest human gratitude I owed them, than which nothing could have given me equal pleasure, the only return I can make them now is, by kindness to those they left behind them. Would to God poor Lizy had lived longer, to have been a farther witness of the truth of what I say; and that I might have had the pleasure of seeing once more a sister, who so truly deserved my esteem and love. But she is happy, while we must toil a little longer here below: let us, however, do it cheerfully and gratefully, supported by the pleasing hope of meeting yet again on a safer shore, where to recollect the storms and difficulties of life will not, perhaps, be inconsistent with that blissful state. "You did right to call your daughter by her name; for you must needs have had a particular tender friendship for one another, endeared as you were by nature, by having passed the affectionate years of your youth together, and by that great softener and engager of hearts, mutual hardship. That it was in my power to ease it a little, I account one of the most exquisite pleasures of my life. But enough of this melancholy though not unpleasing strain.

"I esteem you for your sensible and disinterested advice to Mr. Bell, as you will see by my letter to him; as I approve, entirely, of his marrying again, you may readily ask me why I do not marry at all. My circumstances have hitherto been so variable and uncertain in this fluctuating world, as induce to keep me from engaging in such a state; and now, though they are more settled, and of late, which you will be glad to hear, considerably improved, I begin to think myself too far advanced in life for such youthful undertakings, not to mention some other petty reasons that are apt to startle the delicacy of difficult old bachelors. I am, however, not a little suspicious, that was I to pay a visit to Scotland, of which I have some thoughts of doing soon, I might possibly be tempted to think of a thing not easily repaired if done amiss. I have always been of opinion, that none make better wives than the ladies of Scotland; and yet, who more forsaken than they, while the gentlemen are continually running abroad all the world over? Some of them, it is true, are wise enough to return for a wife. You see I am beginning to make interest already with the Scotch ladies. But no more of this infectious subject. Pray let me hear from you now and then; and though I am not a regular correspondent, yet, perhaps, I may mend in that respect. Remember me kindly to your husband, and believe me to be

Your most affectionate brother,
JAMES THOMSON.

To Mrs. Thomson, in Lanark.

It was during this visit to Hagley that he was met by Shenstone, who says, in a letter dated 20th September, 1747:

"As I was returning from church, on Sunday last, whom should I meet in a chaise, with two horses lengthways, but that right friendly bard, Mr. Thomson? I complimented him upon his arrival in this country, and asked him to accompany Mr. Lyttelton to the Leasowes, which he said he would with abundance of pleasure, and so we parted."

The Castle of Indolence and Coriolanus next occupied his attention, and the former, which had been in progress for nearly fifteen years, and was originally intended to consist of a few stanzas ridiculing the want of energy in himself and some of his friends, appeared in about May, 1748, and was the last production of his pen which he lived to print. The sketch of himself is extremely interesting; though he says all, excepting the first line, was written by a friend, who is asserted to have been Lord Lyttelton.

"A bard here dwelt, more fat than bard beseems;
Who, void of envy, guile, and lust of gain,
On virtue still, and Nature's pleasing themes,
Pour'd forth his unpremeditated strain;
The world forsaking with a calm disdain;
Here laugh'd he careless in his easy seat;
Here quaff'd encircled with the joyous train,
Oft moralizing sage: his ditty sweet
He loated much to write, ne cared to repeat."

Of the other portraits a few only have been identified. The sixty-sixth stanza alludes to Lord Lyttelton; the sixty-seventh to Mr. Quin; the sixty-ninth has been supposed to describe Dr. Ayscough, his lordship's brother-in-law, but it was clearly a picture of Dr. Murdoch, as he applies nearly the same words to him, in a letter printed in this memoir. Another was, he says, intended for his friend, Mr. Paterson, his deputy in the office of Surveyor General of the Leeward Islands.

The following letter is without a date, but from his stating that the Castle of Indolence would be published in a fortnight, it must have been written about April, 1748.

"Dear Paterson,

"In the first place, and previous to my letter, I must recommend to your favour and protection Mr. James Smith, searcher in St. Christopher's: and I beg of you, as occasion shall serve, and as you find he merits it, to advance him in the business of the customs. He is warmly recommended to me by Sargent, who, in verity, turns out one of the best men of our youthful acquaintance, —honest, honourable, friendly, and generous. If we are not to oblige one another, life becomes a paltry, selfish affair,—a pitiful morsel in a corner. Sargent is so happily married, that I could almost say,—the same ease happen to us all.

"That I have not answered several letters of yours, is not owing to the want of friendship and the sincerest regard for you; but you know me well enough to account for my silence, without my saying any more upon that head; besides, I have very little to say that is worthy to be transmitted over the great ocean. The world either futilises so much, or we grow so dead to it, that its transactions make but feeble impressions on us. Retirement and nature are more and more my passion every day, and now, even now, the charming time comes on: Heaven is just on the point, or rather in the very act, of giving earth a green gown. The voice of the nightingale is heard in our lane.

"You must know that I have enlarged my rural domain much to the same dimensions you have done yours. The two fields next to me, from the first of which I have walled—no, no—paled in about as much as my garden consisted of before, so that the walk runs round the hedge, where you may figure me walking any time of the day, and sometimes in the night. I imagine you reclining under cedars, and there enjoying more magnificent slumbers than are known to pale climates of the north; slumbers rendered awful and divine by the solemn stillness and deep fervours of the torrid noon. At other times I image you drinking punch in groves of lime or orange trees, gathering pineapples from hedges, as commonly as we may blackberries, poetising under lofty laurels, or making love under full spread myrtles. But, to lower my style a little as I am such a genuine lover of gardening, why do not you remember me in that instance, and send me some seeds of things that might succeed here during the summer, though they can not perfect their seed sufficiently in this, to them, uncongenial climate to propagate? in which case is the caliloo, which, from the seed it bore here, came up puny, rickety, and good for nothing. There are other things certainly with you, not yet brought over hither, that might flourish here in the summer time, and live tolerably well, provided they be sheltered in a hospitable stove, or green-house, during the winter. You will give me no small pleasure by sending me, from time to time, some of these seeds, if it were no more but to amuse me in making the trial. With regard to the brother gardeners, you ought to know that, as they are half vegetables, the animal part of them will never have spirit enough to consent to the transplanting of the vegetables into distant, dangerous climates. They, happily for themselves, have no other idea but to dig on here, eat, drink, sleep, and kiss their wives.

"As to more important business, I have nothing to write to you. You know best. Be, as you always must be, just and honest; but if you are unhappily, romantic, you shall come home without money, and write a tragedy on yourself. Mr. Lyttelton told me that the Grenvilles and he had strongly recommended the person the governor and you proposed for that considerable office, lately fallen vacant in your department, and that there was good hopes of succeeding. He told me also that Mr. Pitt had said that it was not to be expected that offices such as that is, for which the greatest interest is made here at home, could be accorded to your recommendation, but that as to the middling or inferior offices, if there was not some particular reason to the contrary, regard would be had thereto. This is all that can be reasonably desired; and if you are not infected with a certain Creolian distemper, whereof I am persuaded your soul will utterly resist the contagion, as I hope your body will that of the natural ones, there are few men so capable of that unperishable happiness, that peace and satisfaction of

mind, at least, that proceeds from being reasonable and moderate in our desires, as you. These are the treasures dug from an inexhaustible mine in our own breasts, which, like those in the kingdom of heaven, the rust of time can not corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal. I must learn to work this mine a little more, being struck off from a certain hundred pounds a year which you know I had. West, Mallet, and I, were all routed in one day; if you would know why—out of resentment to our friend in Argyll-street. Yet I have hopes given me of having it restored with interest some time or other. Oh, that some time or other is a great deceiver.

"Coriolanus has not yet appeared on the stage, from the little, dirty jealousy of Tullus* towards him who alone can act Coriolanus.† Indeed, the first has entirely jockeyed the last off the stage, for this season, like a giant in his wrath. Let us have a little more patience, Paterson; nay, let us be cheerful; at last all will be well, at least all will be over,—here I mean: God forbid it should be so hereafter! But, as sure as there is a God, that will not be so.

"Now that I am prating of myself, know that, after fourteen or fifteen years, the Castle of Indolence comes abroad in a fortnight. It will certainly travel as far as Barbadoes. You have an apartment in it as a night pensioner; which, you may remember, I filled up for you during our delightful party at North End. Will ever these days return again? Do not you remember eating the raw fish that were never caught? All our friends are pretty much in statu quo, except it be poor Mr. Lyttelton. He has had the severest trial a human tender heart can have;‡ but the old physician, Time, will at last close up his wounds, though there must always remain an inward smarting. Mitchell§ is in the house for Aberdeenshire, and has spoke modestly well; I hope he will be something else soon; none deserves better: true friendship and humanity dwell in his heart. Gray is working hard to pass his accounts; I spoke to him about that affair. If he gave you any trouble about it, even that of dunning, I shall think strangely, but I dare say he is too friendly to his old friends, and you are among the oldest.

"Symmer is at last tired of gaiety, and is going to take semi-country house at Hammersmith. I am sorry that honest, sensible Warrender, who is in town, seems to be stunted in church preferment. He ought to be a tall cedar in the house of the Lord. If he is not so at last it will add more fuel to my indignation, that burns already too intensely, and throbs towards an eruption. Patrick Murdoch is in town, tutor to Admiral Vernon's son, and is in good hope of another living in Suffolk, that country of tranquillity, where he will then burrow himself in a wife and be happy. Good-natured, obliging Miller, is as usual. Though the Doctor* increases in business he does not decrease in spleen, that is both humane and agreeable, like Jacques in the play; I sometimes, too, have a touch of it.

"But I must break off this chat with you about your friends, which, were I to indulge in, would be endless. As for politics, we are, I believe, on the brink of a peace. The French are vapouring at present in the siege of Maestricht, at the same time they are mortally sick in their marine, and through all the vitals of France. It is a pity we can not continue the war a little longer, and put their agonizing trade quite to death. This siege, I take it, they mean as their last flourish in the war.

"May your health, which never failed you yet, still continue, till you have scraped together enough to return home and live in some snug corner, as happy as the corycium senex, in Virgil's fourth Georgic, whom I recommend both to you and myself as a perfect model of the honest happy life.

Believe me to be ever,
Most sincerely and affectionately yours,
JAMES THOMSON."

This communication discloses the reason of "Coriolanus" being delayed, and the same or some other cause continuing to prevent its appearance, its author was destined never to witness its reception.

It was Thomson's habit to walk from his residence in Kew Lane, near Richmond, whenever the weather rendered going by water ineligible. In one of these journeys from London, he found himself, on reaching Hammersmith, tired and overheated, and he imprudently took a boat to convey him to Kew. The walk from the landing place to his house did not remove the chill which the air on the water produced, and the next day he found himself in a high fever, a state which his plethoric habit rendered alarming. His disorder yielded, however, to care and medicine, and he was soon out of danger; but being tempted by a fine evening to expose himself to the dew before he was perfectly restored, a relapse took place, and he was speedily beyond the powers of human aid. The moment his situation became known in town, his friends, Mr. Mitchell, Mr. Reid, and Dr. Armstrong hastened to him at midnight; but their presence availed nothing, and they had only the melancholy satisfaction of witnessing his last moments. He expired on the 27th of August, 1748,

* Garrick. † Quin.
‡ Mrs. Lyttelton died on the 19th of January, 1746-7.
§ Afterwards Envoy to Berlin and a Knight of the Bath.

* Dr. Armstrong.

having within a few days completed his forty-eighth year. Of his death-bed no particulars are recorded. Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Lyttelton charged themselves with the care of his effects; and on the 25th of October, 1748, letters of administration were granted to them as attorneys of Mary Craig, of Edinburgh, formerly Thomson, wife of William Craig, his sister, and next of kin, for her use.

It was the next object of these generous friends to bring Thomson's posthumous tragedy before the public, and in 1749, "Coriolanus" was acted for the benefit of his relations. The Prologue, which was written by Mr. Lyttelton, and was spoken by Quin, is peculiarly entitled to notice from the affecting manner in which the writer speaks of the author:

"I come not here your candour to implore
For scenes, whose author is, alas! no more;
He wants no advocate his cause to plead;
You will yourselves be patrons of the dead.
No party his benevolence confin'd,
No sect—alike it flow'd to all mankind.
He loved his friends, forgive this gushing tear;
Alas! I feel I am no actor here,
He loved his friends with such a warmth of heart,
So clear of interest, so devoid of art,
Such generous friendship, such unshaken zeal,
No words can speak it, but our tears may tell.
Oh candid truth, O faith without a stain,
Oh manners gently firm, and nobly plain,
Oh sympathizing love of others' bliss,
Where will you find another breast like his?
Such was the Man—the Poet well you know
Oft has he touch'd your hearts with tender woe:
Oft in this crowded house, with just applause
You heard him teach fair Virtue's purest laws;
For his chaste Muse employ'd her heaven-taught lyre
None but the noblest passions to inspire,
Not one immoral, one corrupted thought,
One line, which dying he could wish to blot.
Oh, may to-night your favourable doom
Another laurel add to grace his tomb:
Whilst he, superior now to praise or blame,
Hears not the feeble voice of human fame.
Yet if to those, whom most on earth he loved,
From whom his pious care is now removed,
With whom his liberal hand, and bounteous heart,
Shared all his little fortune could impart;
If to those friends your kind regard shall give
What they no longer can from his receive,
That, that, even now, above yon starry pole,
May touch with pleasure his immortal soul."

Truly was the speaker made to say he was no actor on that occasion, and the feeling which he evinced, in reciting these verses, gave increased effect to their touching eloquence.

Within a few months of his death, his old patroness, the Countess of Hertford, stated in a letter to Lady Luxborough, that Shenstone had shown her his poem on Autumn, and the honour he had done Thomson's memory in it; adding that he told her he purposed erecting an urn to him in Virgil's Grove. In a letter to Shenstone in November, 1753, that lady, then Duchess of Somerset, requested him to allow Dodsley to add to his collection his poem called "Damon's Bower," addressed to William Lyttelton, Esq., and offered to lend him a copy in case he had lost the original. These passages prove her grace's respect for his memory, and render Johnson's remark, that he had displeased her, unlikely. Shenstone speaks feelingly of Thomson's death in a letter written on the 3d of September following:

"Poor Mr. Thomson, Mr. Pitt tells me, is dead. He was to have been at Hagley this week, and then I should probably have seen him here. As it is I will erect an urn in Virgil's Grove to his memory. I was really as much shocked to hear of his death, as if I had known and loved him for a number of years. God knows I lean on a very few friends, and if they drop me, I become a wretched misanthrope."

The author of The Seasons is thus alluded to in the poem mentioned by the Duchess of Somerset:

"Though Thomson, sweet descriptive bard!
Inspiring Autumn sung;
Yet how should we the months regard
That stopp'd his flowing tongue?

"Ah! luckless months, of all the rest,
To whose hard share it fell!
For sure he was the gentlest breast
That ever sung so well.

"He! he is gone, whose moral strain
Could wit and mirth refine:
He! he is gone, whose social vein
Surpass'd the power of wine.

"Fast by the streams he deign'd to praise
In yon sequester'd grove,
To him a votive urn I raise,
To him and friendly Love.

"Yes, there, my Friend! forlorn and sad,
I grave your Thomson's name,
And there his lyre, which Fate forbade
To sound your growing fame.

"There shall my plaintive song recount
Dark themes of hopeless woe,
And faster than the dropping fount
I'll teach my eyes to flow.

"There leaves, in spite of Autumn green,
Shall shade the hallow'd ground,
And Spring will there again be seen
To call forth flowers around.

"But no kind suns will bid me share,
Once more, his social hour;
Ah! Spring! thou never canst repair
This loss to Damon's bower."

Thomson's funeral was attended by Quin, Mallet, Mr. Robertson, the brother-in-law of his Amanda, and another friend, probably either Mr. Lyttelton or Mr. Mitchell. He was buried in Richmond Church, under a plain stone without any inscription, and his works formed the only monument to his memory until the erection of the one in Westminster Abbey, which was opened to

public view on the 10th of May, 1762, the expense of which was defrayed by an edition of his works printed in that year in two quarto volumes, and published by subscription. It is situated between those of Shakspeare and Rowe, and presents a figure of Thomson sitting, leaning his left arm upon a pedestal, and holding a book with the cap of liberty in his right hand. Upon the pedestal is carved a bas-relief of "The Seasons," to which a boy points, offering him a laurel crown as the reward of his genius. At the feet of the figure is a magic mask and ancient harp. The whole is supported by a projecting pedestal; and on a pannel is inscribed his name, age, and the date of his death, with the lines which are inserted at the commencement of this Memoir, taken from his Summer. The monument was designed by Adam, and executed by Michael and Henry Spang.

Lord Buchan afterwards placed a small brass tablet in Richmond Church with the following inscription:

In the earth, below this tablet,
are the remains of
JAMES THOMSON,
author of the beautiful poems, entituled,
"The Seasons," the "Castle of Indolence," &c.
who died at Richmond
on the 27th of August,
and was buried
on the 29th O. S. 1748.
The Earl of Buchan,
unwilling that
so good a man, and sweet a poet,
should be without a memorial,
has denoted the place of his interment,
for the satisfaction of his admirers,
in the year of our Lord,
M.DCC.XCII.

Beneath this inscription, his lordship added this beautiful passage from Winter,

"Father of Light and life! thou Good Supreme!
O teach me what is good! teach me thyself!
Save me from folly, vanity, and vice,
From every low pursuit! and feed my soul
With knowledge, conscious peace, and virtue pure;
Sacred, substantial, never fading bliss!"

By the sale of an edition of his works, undertaken for the purpose of aiding his relations, and the profits of his last Tragedy, a sufficient sum was raised to liquidate all his debts and to leave a handsome residue.*

In the whole range of British poetry Thomson's "Seasons" are, perhaps, the earliest read, and most generally admired; hence it is not necessary to say much on the peculiar character of a genius so well known and so often discussed. He was the Poet of Nature, and his chief merit consisted in describing her, and the pleasure afforded by a contemplation of her infinite and glorious varieties. Studying her deeply, his mind acquired that placidity of thought and feeling which an abstraction from public life is sure to generate. She was to him, as he has himself said, a source of happiness of which fortune could not deprive him;—

"I care not, fortune, what you me deny;
You can not rob me of free nature's grace;
You can not shut the windows of the sky,
Through which Aurora shows her brightening face;
You can not bar my constant feet to trace
The woods and lawns, by living stream at eve:
Let health my nerves, and finer fibres leave;
Of fancy, reason, virtue, nought can me bereave."

His pictures of scenery and of rural life are the productions of a master, and render him the Claude of poets. The Seasons are the first book from which we are taught to worship the goddess to whose service the bard of Ednam devoted himself, and who is there that has reflected on the magni-

* A correspondent in the European Magazine, for 1819, has afforded very satisfactory information about the sums which Thomson obtained for several of his works, and of the dates of the agreements respecting them, derived from an appeal against a decision of the Court of Chancery, many years since, on a question of literary property.

It appears Thomson sold Sophonisba, a Tragedy, and Spring, a Poem, to Andrew Millar, 15th January, 1729, for 137*l.* 10*s.* On the 28th of July in the same year, he sold to John Millan, "Summer," "Winter," "Autumn," "Britannia," Poem to Newton, the Hymn, and an Essay on Descriptive Poetry, for 105*l.* On the 16th of June, 1738, Andrew Millar purchased these Poems of John Millan at the original price. On the 13th of June, 1769, Andrew Millar's executors sold the copyright of the whole by Auction to fifteen London booksellers, for the sum of 505*l.* Soon after Davis, the Bookseller, sold half his twelfth, for the shares were unequal, to Becket and Dehondt, not of the original list of purchasers, for 21*l.* being the price he had paid for that proportion.

It is a curious fact that this was a close sale; and Alexander Donaldson, the Edinburgh Bookseller, who wished to attend was not admitted. He then published a copy of "The Seasons" at Edinburgh, stated in the title to be printed in 1768, the sale of which was said, however, to have begun before the auction of the copyright took place.

A singular anecdote was related in the Edinburgh Star, dated from Logan House, G. D. October, 1821, and signed "An Old Shepherd," which tends to fix the authorship of "The Gentle Shepherd," attributed to Allan Ramsay on Thomson. To what degree of credit it is entitled is left to the reader to determine. The following is the statement on the subject which was copied into the Gentleman's Magazine, vol. xci. part ii. p. 351.

"About thirty years ago, there was a respectable old man, of the name of John Steel, who was well acquainted with Allan Ramsay; and he told John Steel himself, that when Mr. Thomson, the author of "The Seasons," was in his shop at Edinburgh, getting himself shaven, Ramsay was repeating some of his poems. Mr. Thomson says to him, 'I have something to emit to the world, but I do not wish to father it.' Ramsay asked what he would give him, and he would father it. Mr. Thomson replied, all the profit that arose from the publication. 'A bargain be it,' said Ramsay. Mr. Thomson delivered him the manuscript. So, from what is said above, Mr. Thomson, the author of 'The Seasons,' is the author of 'The Gentle Shepherd,' and Allan Ramsay is the father of it. This, I believe, is the truth."

ficence of an extended landscape, viewed the sun as he emerges from the horizon, or witnessed the setting of that glorious orb when he leaves the world to reflection and repose, and does not feel his descriptions rush upon the mind, and heighten his enjoyment?

It has been said that the style of that work is pompous, and that it contains many faults. The remark is partially true. His style is, in some places, monotonous, from its unvaried elevation; but to him Nature was a subject of the profoundest reverence, and he, doubtless, considered that she ought to be spoken of with solemnity; though it is evident from one of his verses, which is often cited, that he was aware simplicity is the most becoming garb of majesty and beauty. Another objection to The Seasons is, that they contain frequent digressions, and, notwithstanding that it is made by an authority, from which it may be presumptuous to dissent, the justice of the observation can not, perhaps, be established. Every one who has read them will admit that the History of Caledon and Amelia and of Lavinia, for example, have afforded as much pleasure as any other parts, and a poem descriptive of scenery, storms, and sunshine, requires the introduction of human beings to give it life and animation. A painter is not censured for adding figures to a landscape, and he is only required to render them graceful, and to make them harmonize with his subject. The characters in The Seasons are all in keeping: a gleaner is as necessary to a harvest field as a lover to a romance; and it seems hypercritical to say that there should be nothing of interest in the lives of the inhabitants of the villages or hamlets which are alluded to.

Another test of the soundness of this criticism is, to inquire, whether that work does not owe its chief popularity to those very digressions. Few persons will read a volume, however beautiful the descriptions which it contains, unless they are relieved by incidents of human life; and if it were possible to strip The Seasons of every passage not strictly relevant, they would lose their chief attractions, and soon be thrown aside.

One charm of poetry is, that it often presents a vivid picture of the idiosyncrasy of an author's mind, and this is most conspicuous in the episodes to the immediate subject of his labours. The chain of thought which led him astray may not unfrequently be discovered, and it is on such occasions, chiefly, that those splendid emanations which become aphorisms to future ages are produced. Genius seems then to cast aside all the fetters which art imposes, and individual feeling usurping for the moment entire dominion, the mistress who has cheered his hopes, or the coquette who has abandoned him, his friend, or his enemy, as either may occur to his imagination, is sure to be commemorated in words glowing with the fervor of inspiration. Whilst he pursues the thread of his tale, we are reminded of the Poet alone, and though we may admire his skill, it is only when he breaks upon us in some spontaneous burst of passion that we sympathise with the man, and are excited to kindred enthusiasm.

To the power of painting scenery, and delineating the softer and more pleasing traits of character, Thomson's genius seems to have been confined. Truly has he said of himself,

> "I solitary court
> The inspiring breeze, and meditate the book
> Of Nature, ever open; aiming thence,
> Warm from the heart to pour the moral song;"

but he was incapable of describing the heart when assailed by boisterous passions, and his representations of ambition, patriotism, or revenge, are comparatively feeble. His tragedies, though not without merit as compositions, are declamatory, cold, and vapid. His heroes and heroines relate their woes in good verse, but we remain unmoved, and follow them to their fate with the indifference of stoics. No man was animated by a stronger or more disinterested love of public freedom than Thomson, and he every where inculcates patriotic sentiments; but his "Liberty" neither stimulates our patriotism, nor increases our veneration for his idol. No writer has said more on these subjects, and when he lived, it was the fashion to pretend to be actuated by noble and generous motives, but it may be doubted if any poet ever produced them less in his own time; and the idea that he, or any one else, could excite them now is ridiculous. "Liberty" is, therefore, read only because it is one of his works, and it is not likely that it will ever become popular.

The Castle of Indolence" displays greater poetical invention than any other of his pieces; and, little as allegory is suited to the existing taste, it must still be read with pleasure. Of his Odes and minor articles there is little that need be said; and part of them have already been sufficiently noticed. His Hymn is destined to be as permanent a favourite as The Seasons, to which, indeed, it is an appropriate conclusion, and, like every other production of its author, it displays the highest veneration for the Deity.

Thomson's only prose work is an Essay on Descriptive Poetry, which was advertised as a separate production, in 1730, but which formed the Preface to the second edition of "Winter," and in this edition it is prefixed to The Seasons. That Essay is remarkable, not so much for ingenuity or original conceptions as for the arguments used to show that poetry ought to be devoted to loftier subjects than those on which many had exercised their talents. It was his especial merit that he

founded a new school in his art, and disdaining to follow in the path which conducted most of his contemporaries to fame, he, with the daring of genius, struck out a course for himself.

It must be evident from the letters in this memoir, that Thomson did not excel in correspondence; and his dislike to writing letters, which was very great, may have been either the cause or effect of his being inferior in this respect to other poets of the last century.

Thomson's character was in every respect consistent with what his writings lead us to expect. He was high-minded, amiable, generous, and humane. Equable in his temper, and affable in his deportment, he was rarely ruffled but by the knowledge of some act of cruelty or injustice; and as he magnanimously forgave the petty assaults which envy or malignity leveled at him, and stood aloof from the poetical warfare which raged with great heat during some part of his career, he was soon, as if by common consent, respected by all the belligerents. His society was select and distinguished. Pope, Hill, Dr. Armstrong, the Bishop of Derry, Mr. afterwards Sir Andrew Mitchell, Mendez, Dr. De la Cour, Mallet, Hammond whom he eulogises in "The Seasons," Quin, and above all Mr. Lyttelton, were his most intimate friends. With Pope he lived on terms of great friendship; and, according to Dr. Johnson, he displayed his regard in a poetical epistle addressed to Thomson, whilst he was in Italy in 1731, but of which Pope "abated the value by transplanting some of the lines into his Epistle to Arbuthnot." Mr. Robertson stated, in reply to Mr. Park's question,* whether Pope did not often visit Thomson, "Yes, frequently. Pope has sometimes said, 'Thomson, I'll walk to the end of your garden, and then set off to the bottom of Kew Foot Lane, and back. Pope courted Thomson, and Thomson was always admitted to Pope, whether he had company or not."

Next to poetry he was fond of civil and natural history, voyages and travels, and in his leisure hours he found amusement in gardening. Of the fine arts, music was his chief delight; but he was an admirer of painting and sculpture, and formed a valuable collection of prints and drawings from the antique.

The besetting sin of Thomson's character was indolence, and of this he was himself fully aware, as he alludes to the failing in himself and some of his friends, in the "Castle of Indolence." He seldom rose before noon, and his time for composition was generally about midnight. His manners are sometimes represented as having been coarse; but his zealous defender, Lord Buchan, asserts, on the contrary, that Lord Chatham, Lord Temple, Lord Lyttelton, Sir Andrew Mitchel, Dr. Armstrong, and Dr. Murdoch, agreed in declaring that he was "a gentleman at all points." His intimate friend, Mr. Robertson, told Mr. Park, that "Thomson was neither a petit maître nor a boor; he had simplicity without rudeness, and a cultivated manner without being courtly;" and this may, perhaps, be considered the most accurate definition of his deportment.

Much light is often thrown on a man's character by authenticated anecdotes. Of Thomson, however, very few are remembered, and the following are introduced because his previous biographers have thought them worthy of notice rather than from any particular claims which they possess to attention.

It is said that he was so careless about money, that once, when paying a brewer he gave him two bank notes rolled together instead of one, and, when told of his mistake, he appeared perfectly indifferent, saying, "he had enough to go on without it." On one occasion he was robbed of his watch between London and Richmond, and when Mr. Robertson expressed regret for his loss, he replied, "Pshaw, I am glad they took it from me, it was never good for any thing." Having invited some friends to dinner, one of them informed him that there was a general stipulation there should be no hard drinking, Thomson acquiesced, only requiring that each man should drink his bottle. The terms were accepted unconditionally, and, when the cloth was removed, a three quart bottle was set before each of his guests.

In person Thomson was rather stout and above the middle size; his countenance was not remarkable for expression, though in his youth, he was considered handsome, but in conversation his face became animated and his eye fiery and intellectual. Silent in mixed company, his wit and vivacity seemed reserved for his friends, and in their society he was communicative, playful, and entertaining. Few men possessed in a greater degree the art of creating firm and affectionate friendship. Those with whom he became acquainted at the commencement of his career loved him till its close, and the individuals who had given to his life its sweetest enjoyments watched over his death-bed, and became the guardians of his fame, by superintending the only monuments of which genius ought to be ambitious, a complete edition of his works, and a tablet in Westminster Abbey.

It has been remarked that the poets of the day did not commemorate Thomson's genius by exerting their own in honour of his memory; and an epigram appeared in consequence. There is not, however, much justice in the remark. Not

* In October, 1791, Thomas Park, Esq. the poet, called on Mr. Robertson, who was surgeon to the Royal Household at Kew, the intimate friend of Thomson, with the view of gaining information about him. He committed to paper all he gleaned, and it has since been printed.

only did Collins, Shenstone, Lyttelton, Mendez, and others, sing his praises in most appropriate strains, but immediately after his decease, "Musidorus, a poem sacred to his memory," appeared; and since that time Burns, Pye, the Honourable Mrs. Boscawen, &c. have imitated their example. That lady became possessed of his house near Richmond, and evinced her respect for the Poet, by preserving every memorial of him which could be found.

In a retired part of the gardens she replaced the little rural seat so much the favourite of Thomson, and hung votive tablets or inscriptions round it, in honour of her admired poet, whose bust on a pediment of the seat on entering it, had the following sentence:

"Here Thomson sung
The Seasons, and their change."

Within the alcove Mrs. Boscawen placed the little antique table, on which it is said the Poet penned many of his lines. The inside was further adorned with well adapted citations from other writers, who have eulogized his talents; and in the centre, was the following inscription:

Within this pleasing retirement,
allured by the music of the nightingale,
which warbled in soft unison
to the melody of his soul,
in unaffected cheerfulness,
and genial, though simple elegance,
lived
JAMES THOMSON!
Sensibly alive to all the beauties of nature,
he painted their images as they rose in review;
and poured the whole profusion of them
into his inimitable
SEASONS!
Warmed with intense devotion
to the Sovereign of the Universe,
its flame glowed through all his compositions.
Animated with unbounded benevolence,
with the tenderest social sympathy,
he never gave one moment's pain
to any of his fellow creatures;
save, only, by his death,
which happened at this place,
on the
27th day of August, 1748.

Thomson was never married, and in his letter to his sister, in 1747, he says he was too poor to form a domestic establishment. The only woman to whom he was known to be attached, was Miss Young, daughter of Captain Gilbert Young, of the family of that name, in Gulyhill, in Dumfriesshire. She was a very fine young woman of superior endowments, and married Admiral Campbell. Her lover has celebrated her in several poems by the name of "Amanda," and so deep was his passion, that his friend Mr. Robertson, who married her sister, considers that his disappointment in obtaining her rendered him indifferent to life. One, if not the only impediment to their union, was his straitened circumstances.

Thomson was, as has been before stated, one of nine children. His only brother John came to London, and acted as his amanuensis, but being attacked by consumption, he returned to Scotland, and died young. Of his sisters, only three are known to have married. Jean, the eldest, was the wife of Mr. Robert Thomson, Master of the Grammar School at Lanark, with whom Boswell says, in July, 1777, he had placed two of his nephews. She was then an old woman, but having retained her memory, gave that writer many particulars of the Poet, together with the letter which Johnson has printed. Her son Robert, who was a student of medicine in Edinburgh, died in his father's lifetime at Lanark; and of her daughters, Elizabeth was born before 1747, and Beatrix married Mr. Thomas Prentice of Jerviswood.

Elizabeth, his second sister, was the wife of the Rev. Robert Bell, Minister of Strathaven in Clydesdale, and died some time before 1747. His reply to Mr. Bell's request that he would consent to her nuptials was addressed to her:

MY DEAR SISTER,

I received a letter from Mr. Robert Bell, Minister of Strathaven, in which he asks my consent to his marriage with you. Mr. Gusthart acquainted me with this some time ago; to whose letter I have returned an answer, which he tells me he has showed you both. I entirely agree to this marriage, as I find it to be a marriage of inclination, and founded upon long acquaintance and mutual esteem. Your behaviour hitherto has been such as gives me very great satisfaction, in the small assistance I have been able to afford you. Now you are going to enter upon a new state of life, charged with higher cares and duties, I need not advise you how to behave in it, since you are so near Mr. Gusthart, who, by his good council and friendly assistance, has been so kind to you all along; only I must chiefly recommend to you to cultivate, by every method, that union of hearts, that agreement and sympathy of tempers, in which consists the true happiness of the marriage state. The economy and gentle management of a family is a woman's natural province, and from that her best praise arises. You will apply yourself thereto as it becomes a good and virtuous wife. I dare say I need not put you in mind of having a just and grateful sense of, and future confidence in, the goodness of God, who has been to you a 'Father to the fatherless.' Though you will hereafter be more immediately under the protection of another, yet you may always depend upon the sincere friendship, and tenderest good offices of your most affectionate brother,

JAMES THOMSON."

"By last post I wrote to Jeany about the affairs she mentioned to me. Remember me kindly to all friends."

Mrs. Bell had two sons, Dr. James Bell, Minister of Coldstream, who published a volume of Sermons, and Thomas Bell, who died a Merchant at Jamaica.

Mary, the poet's youngest sister, married Mr. William Craig, Merchant of Edinburgh, and died on the 11th of September, 1790, the day on which Lord Buchan celebrated the anniversary of the poet's birth. She had only one son, James, an ingenious architect, who planned the new Town of Edinburgh, and died in that city on the 23d of June, 1795. He intended to erect a pillar to his uncle in the village of Ednam, and wished Dr. Beattie to write an appropriate inscription. The intention was not carried into execution, but Beattie's sensible letter in reply to the request, in which he ridicules inscriptions in Latin to an English poet, and states what ought to be said on these occasions, might have been read with advantage by those who superintended Burns's monument. Lord Buchan's exuberant zeal, in honour of Thomson, in crowning his bust, and other fooleries, approaches so nearly to the ridiculous, that his motive scarcely secures him from being laughed at. The annual commemoration of the poet's birth is in better taste; and proves the generous pride with which

> "——— Scotia, with exulting tear,
> Proclaims that Thomson was her son."

Lord Lyttelton has justly said of Thomson's writings, that they contain

> "No line which dying he could wish to blot;"

and, considering the taste of the age in which he lived, this praise is perhaps the highest which could be pronounced. With a slight alteration the same eulogy may be passed on his whole life; for it was free from a single act which could create remorse. To his relations he was liberal and affectionate; to his friends faithful and devoted: viewing all mankind with beneficence and love, he performed with exemplary but unostentatious piety that first of Christian virtues, to teach the world to reverence the Creator in his works, and to learn from them veneration for his wisdom and confidence in his mercy. Thus the character of Thomson, both as a writer and a man, seems almost perfect; and whilst the admirer of his genius may point to his poems as some of the most splendid emanations of human intellect, those who deem it more important to inquire how talents are applied than to boast of their extent, may proudly adduce him as a rare example of the application of a mind of the highest capacity to the improvement of the taste and morals of society. His poems may be placed in the hands of our wives and our daughters even in the present age, when our ears are more delicate than our consciences, without first subjecting them to the ordeal of a modern expurgator. Of his productions no "Family Editions," which mar, if they do not destroy, the natural vigour of a writer, are necessary. By confining himself to the strict rules of propriety, he has placed his fame beyond the power of those relentless censors who have emasculated Shakspeare, our national bard, and Gibbon, our most eloquent historian. Secure from the revolutions of taste or time, Thomson's labours are destined to descend with undiminished admiration to the latest posterity; and it may be predicted with confidence, that future generations, like the last and the present, will have their reverence for the God of Nature excited, and their earliest attachment to Nature herself strengthened, by the Poet who has sung her in all her "Seasons."

ADDENDA TO THE MEMOIR OF THOMSON.

Since the foregoing Life of Thomson was printed, the author has been favoured with some of the Poet's letters, and other materials, by Mr. David Laing, of Edinburgh, who, to a laudable zeal in collecting information about the history and literature of his country, unites the greatest liberality, by placing the result of his researches at the disposition of his friends.

The Reverend Thomas Thomson, the Poet's father, was licensed to preach on the 17th June, 1691; was ordained minister of Ednam, 12th July, 1692; and was removed to Sudden, or Southdean, about the year 1701, which accounts for his son's being sent to school at Jedburgh. The exact time of his death has not been ascertained, but it must have been about 1720.*

The Poet was entered a student of the University of Edinburgh in 1719, but his attendance, as was often the case, seems to have been irregular, for the only subsequent notice of him is on the 27th October, 1724, when he performed a prescribed exercise, being a Lecture on the tenth section of the 119th Psalm. It is said by all his biographers, that this exercise was a poetical paraphrase of the 104th Psalm;† that the powers of

* Notices of the Rev. Thomas Thomson occur in "Kirkwood's Plea before the Kirk." 4to. London. 1698.

† See p. iv. of the Memoir.

imagination which it displayed, though complimented by the divinity professor, were considered unsuited to the sacred office for which he was designed; that he consequently abandoned his intention of entering the ministry; and, from the approbation which Mr. Auditor Benson expressed of the piece, his thoughts were directed to London.

This story, though not without some foundation, inasmuch as he wrote a paraphrase of the Psalm in question, is disproved by incontrovertible facts. No paraphrase in verse of a Psalm could possibly have been admitted as an exercise at the University; and the subject referred to was a prose lecture, or dissertation, on part of the 119th Psalm; but as it may have been written in too flowery a style, and been too redundant in poetical imagery, the censure said to have been pronounced by the divinity professor possibly occurred. That this circumstance did not alter his views with respect to the church is evident from his saying, in some letters from London, that he still intended to get ordained. It does not appear, from the registers of the University, that he ever took his Master of Art's degree, but he certainly added the distinction to his name in the first edition of "Winter," and the omission of it afterwards probably arose from his calling himself, in the title pages of his works, Mr. Thomson. Among his contemporaries at the University, where their friendship commenced, were David Malloch, or Mallet, who contributed several pieces to the "Edinburgh Miscellany," and Patrick Murdoch, his subsequent biographer; but his earliest, and one of the warmest of his friends, was Dr. Cranston, to whom all the following letters, as well as some of those which are introduced into the Memoir, were addressed.

The annexed letter from Thomson, whilst at the University, presents a favourable idea of his pursuits and opinions before he attained his majority.

SIR, *Edinburgh, Dec.* 11, 1720.

I received yours, wherein you acquaint me that mine was very acceptable to you. I am heartily glad of it; and to waive all ceremony, if any thing I can scribble be entertaining to you, may I be damned to transcribe dull books for the press all my life if I do not write abundantly. I fondly embrace the proposal you make of a frequent correspondence this winter, and that from the very same principle you mention; and when the native bright ideas which flow from your good humour have the ascendant over those gloomy ones that attend your profession, I expect you will not be wanting.

You will allege that I have the advantage over you, being in town, where daily happen a variety of incidents. In the first place you must know, though I live in Edinburgh, yet I am little conversant in the beau monde, viz. concerts, balls, assemblies, &c. where beauty shines and coxcombs admire themselves. If nature had thrown me in a more soft and indolent mould, had made me a Shapely or a Sir Fopling Flutter, if fortune had filled my pockets, I suppose my head is empty enough as it is, had I been taught to cut a caper, to hum a tune, to take a pinch, and lisp nonsense with all the grace of fashionable insipidity, then I could—what could I have done? hardly write; but, however, I might have made a shift to fill up a half sheet with 'rat me,' 'damn me,' &c. interspersed with broken characters of ladies gliding over my fancy like a passing image over a mirror. But if both nature and fortune had been indulgent to me, and made a rich, finished gentleman, yet would I have reckoned it a piece of my greatest happiness to be acquainted with you, and you should have had entertainment if it was within the circle of wit and beauty to afford it; but alas! as it is what can you expect from the Divinity hall or a Tippeny cell? It must be owned indeed, that here in Edinburgh, to us humble sons of Tippeny, if beauty were as propitious as wit sometimes, we would have no reason to complain of the superior fortune of the fluttering generation; and O! ye foolish women, who have thus bewitched you? is it not wit that immortalizes beauty, that heightens it, and preserves it in a fresh eternal bloom? And did ever a fop either justly praise or admire you? but perhaps what I am railing at is well ordered, and if there was such a familiar intercourse betwixt wit and beauty as I would have, wit would degenerate into softness and luxury, and lose all its edge and keenness; it would dissolve in sighs or burst in nonsense. Wit and beauty thus joined would be, as Shakspeare has it, making honey a sauce to sugar; and yet another would say that beauty, divine beauty! enlivens, heightens, and refines wit; that even wit is the necessary result of beauty, which puts the spirits in that harmonious motion that produces it that tunes them to that ecstasy, and makes them dart through the nerves, and sparkle in the eyes! —but whither am I rambling? What I am going to propose is, and you see there is great need for it, that you would in your next settle our correspondence into some order, and acquaint me on what subject you would have me write to you, for on news of any kind I shall soon run aground.

You write to me that Misjohn* and his quadruped are making a large eccentrical orbit, toge-

* Thomson alludes in most of his letters to some friend by this appellation, and the Earl of Buchan observes, that it was "undoubtedly the Rev. Mr. J. Wilson, Minister of the Parish of Maxton, in Roxburghshire, a particular friend of Dr. Cranston of Ancrum, and of Thomson."

ther with two or three wallets full of books, which I suppose will be multiplied into several more of papers before they return; belike they may have taken a trip into China, and then we shall have his travels. There is one thing I hear storied, God forbid it be true! that his horse is metamorphosing into an ass; and by the last accounts I had of it, its lugs are shot up into a strange length, and the cross was just beginning to dawn upon its shoulders; and, besides, as it one day was saluting a capful of oats, wonderful to tell! it fell a-braying. I wish Nanny Noble were so comfortably settled as you hint. Tell Misjohn, when you see him, that I have a bundle of worthies for him, if once I had received his packet.

There are some come from London here lately, that teach natural philosophy by way of shows by the beat of drum, but more of that afterwards. I designed to have sent you a manuscript poem, but I have no time till next week.

Yours heartily,

JAMES THOMSON.

Dr. Cranston appears to have furnished him with letters of introduction, to which he alludes in two letters written within the fortnight which preceded his departure for London. The observation on a future state, which occurs in the second of these letters, is the earliest expression of the Poet's religious opinions which has been discovered; and his correspondence, as well as his works, proved that they never varied.

DEAR SIR, *Edinburgh* ———

I received yours and can never sufficiently resent the regard for my welfare that you show in them. You are so modest as to desire me to correct any thing I see amiss in your letter to Mr. Elliot, and you will transcribe it again; but I assure you I am not so vain as to attempt it: if there was no other thing to bind me to a good behaviour but your recommendation and character of me, I could go great lengths of mortification to answer them. Your letter to my cousin, I do not doubt, will be considerably useful to me, if I can find him out. I remember I heard that Mr. Colden's letter was very serviceable to George Brown. I do not doubt but if Mr. Colden was advertised, I might have one too, and there will be time enough, for our ship sails not this fortnight, yet during that time, if it can contribute any thing to your diversion, you shall hear from me every opportunity, and when I go to London, you may lay your account of paying out some sixpences. If you have leisure, I could wish to hear from you before I go away, notwithstanding your apostolical conclusion, which I believe as sincere, and will be as effectual, as the best of them.

I am yours, J. T.

TO DOCTOR CRANSTON, AT ANCRUM.

DEAR SIR,

I received yours, by which I find you have been as much concerned as Mr. Golden indifferent about me; he, good man, recommends me to God Almighty: very well; but I wish he had exerted something more of the layman on that . . . for, to be deeply serious, the . . . . Father of mankind beholds all . . . offspring with a melting eye . . . needs none to prompt him to acts of goodness, so that I can not conceive for what purpose people's prayers for one another are, unless it be to stir up humane and social dispositions in themselves. I have gotten several recommendations, and am promised more afterwards, when I am fixed on any particular view, which would make them more pointed and effectual; I shall do all that is in my power, act, hope, and so either make something out, or be buried in obscurity. There is, and I am persuaded of it, I triumph in it, another life after this, which depends as to its happiness on our virtue, as this for the most part on our fortune. My spirits have gotten such a serious turn by these reflections, that although I be thinking on Misjohn, I declare I shall hardly force a laugh before we part, for this I think will be my last letter from Edinburgh, for I expect to sail every day; well, since I was speaking of that merry soul, I hope he is as bright, as easy, as dégagé, as susceptible of an intense laugh as he used to be; tell him when you see him that I laugh in imagination with him, ha! ha! ha! Misjohn, how in the name of wonder dragged you so much good humour along with you through the thorny paths of systems and school divinity, considering the many hardy attempts you have had to epitomize . . . . . and so forth—whenever I began to rust in these —— exercises, the doctor cleared me—well, may wit, humour, and everlasting joy surround you both, and if I but at any time . . . kindle up the laugh from London, I shall be sure to ha . . . . returned upon . . . . with greater force. Yours, while I am

JAMES THOMSON

If you have the opportunity to be at Maxton, in Mr. Wilson's, there you will find a treasure of a good comrade, called Peter Murdock, who will stay there these eight days.

His first letter to Dr. Cranston, after he arrived in London, was dated on the 3d of April, 1725. It expresses many fears for his success, and is interesting from the account of the impression made upon him by his first visit to the theatres. Amidst many playful remarks, and some levity in his criticism on the actors, and especially on the actresses, there is an anxiety manifested about his

future career, which shows that the state of his resources and the uncertainty of his plans rendered his mind ill at ease.

London, April 3, 1725.

DEAR SIR, I wish you joy of the spring.

I had yours some days since, the only letter I received since I came from Scotland. I was almost out of humour at the letter I wrote for to Mr. Elliott, since it so curtailed yours to me; I went and delivered it; he received me affably enough, and promised me his assistance, though at the same time he told me, which every one tells me, that it will be prodigiously difficult to succeed in the business you know I design. However, come what will come, I shall make an effort, and leave the rest to providence. There is, I am persuaded, a necessary fixed chain of things, and I hope my fortune, whatever it be, shall be linked to diligence and honesty. If I should not succeed, in your next advise me what I should do. Succeed or not, I firmly resolve to pursue divinity as the only thing now I am fit for. Now if I cannot accomplish the design on which I came up, I think I had best make interest and pass my trials here, so that if I be obliged soon to return to Scotland again, I may not return no better than I came away: and to be deeply serious with you, the more I see of the vanity and wickedness of the world I am more inclined to that sacred office. I was going to bid you suppress that rising laugh, but I check myself severely again for suffering such an unbecoming thought of you to enter into my mind—so much for business.

The playhouse is indeed a very fine entertainment, though not to the height I expected. A tragedy, I think, or a fine character in a comedy, gives greater pleasure read than acted; but your fools and persons of a very whimsical and humorous character are a delicious morsel on the stage; they indeed exercise my risible faculty, and particularly your old friend Daniel, in Oroonoko, diverted me infinitely; the gravedigger in Hamlet, Beau Clincher and his brother, in the Trip to the Jubilee, pleased me extremely too. Mr. Booth has a very majestic appearance, a full, harmonious voice, and vastly exceeds them all in acting tragedy. The last act in Cato he does to perfection, and you would think he expired with the 'Oh! that ends it.' Mr. Wilks, I believe, has been a very fine actor for the fine gentleman and the young hero, but his face now is wrinkled, his voice broken; and age forbids the youthful, clear Cibber; I have not seen much of his action yet. Mills and Johnstoun are pretty good actors. Dicky Norris, that little comical, toothless devil, will turn his back, and crack a very good jest yet: there are some others of them execrable. Mrs. Oldfield has a smiling jolly face, acts very well in comedy, but best of all I suppose in bed; she turns her body, and leers with her eyes most bewitchingly. Mrs. Porter excels in tragedy, has a short piercing voice, and enters most into her character, and if she did not act well she could not be endured, being more disagreeable in her appearance than any of them. Mrs. Booth acts some things very well, and particularly Ophelia's madness in Hamlet inimitably; but then she dances so deliciously, has such melting, lascivious motions, airs, and postures, as, indeed, according to what you suspect, almost throws the material part of me into action too; indeed the women are generally the handsomest in the house, and better actors than the men, but perhaps their sex prejudices me in their favour. These are a few of the observations I have made at Drury Lane Theatre hitherto, to which I have paid five visits, but have not been at the New House yet. My purse will not keep pace with my inclinations in that matter. O! if I had Misjohn here, to see some of their top fools, he would shakes the scenes with laughter. Give my service to him. Tell him I laugh at the thoughts of him, and should be very glad to hear from him. You may send your letters to my mother in Edinburgh, in a line enclosed, desiring her to send them to me, which I have directed her to do, frank. However, you may send the next directly to me, to your cousin's care, and perhaps I shall fall upon a more expedite way. I must for the present stop here, and subscribe myself, Yours sincerely,

JAMES THOMSON.

It is said* that Mr. Forbes, who was afterwards Lord President of the Court of Session, was Thomson's earliest patron in London. This statement is established by a letter from the widow of that gentleman to Lord Buchan, in reply to his request that she would furnish him with any anecdotes of the Poet:

"I am sorry I can not recollect any of those particular characteristic anecdotes your lordship says I told you of in the year 84, of my father and Mr. Thomson the poet; all the information I can give is, that they were intimate friends, my father having been Mr. Thomson's first acquaintance and patron on his coming to London, and the former having a numerous acquaintance amongst people of the first rank, and also amongst the literati folk; he did not fail to bring Thomson forward as much as lay in his power. His first introductions were to the Duke of Argyle, the Earl of Burlington, and Sir Robert Walpole, to Dr. Arbuthnot, Mr. Pope, and Mr. Gay.

"I remember, previous to the publication of his Seasons, that many long winter evenings the two

* Memoirs, p. v.

were closeted, as I suppose correcting for the press, and I used to see loose pages of the manuscript lying interlined with my father's hand, who always expressed as great a value for Mr. Thomson's personal merit as for his poetical talents."

Thomson's next letter to Cranston, dated from East Barnet, on the 20th of July, 1725, is of great value, from the information which it affords of his situation. It fixes the date of his mother's death; it proves when he was a tutor in Lord Binning's family;* and it shows that his views were then strongly fixed upon the church.

DEAR DOCTOR, *East Barnet, July* 20, 1725.

I CAN NOT imagine the meaning of this long silence, unless my last letter has not come to your hand, which was written two or three months since. I would have seconded it before now, but one thing and another, particularly the severe affliction of my mother's death, incapacitated me for entertaining my friend. Now I am pretty much at ease in the country, ten miles from London, teaching Lord Binning's son to read, a low task, you know, not so suitable to my temper, but I must learn that necessary lesson of suiting my mind and temper to my state. I hope I shall not pass my time here without improvement, the great design of my coming hither, and then in due time, I resolve, through God's assistance, to consummate my original study of divinity; for you know the business of a tutor is only precarious and for the present. I approve, every day more and more, of your advice to your brother John, as to the direction of his study; if well pursued it is as honourable, useful, and certain a method of living as one, in his or my circumstances, could readily fall into . . . . . contemptible notions of things at home, and romantic ones of things abroad; perhaps I was too much affected that way, but I hope in the issue it shall not be worse for me . . . . . what he seemed to be fond of, viz. surgery. It is, as you can not but know, the merest drug here in the world. Scotland is really fruitful of surgeons, they come here like flocks of vultures every day, and, by a merciful providential kind of instinct, transport themselves to foreign countries. The Change is quite full of them, they peruse the shipbills and meet the sea captains. Pray let John know my sentiments in this matter, because through a giddy discontent I spoke too slightly to him of the study which he has now so happily espoused I am not now in London, so can not acquaint you with any thing that passes there within my narrow observation. Being there on Sunday last, I heard that every thing was very dead both with respect to the scribblers of politics and poetry. As for news you never want too many of them, they increase proportionally to their distance from their source, like rivers, or, since I am in the way of similes, like Discord, as she . . . . . person is to her small at first, but in a short time her body reaches from the zenith to the nadir, and her arms from one pole to the other, which is the case of fame. To sound as fame is, when great actions make a great noise. So news are a noise commonly about nothing. As for poetry, she is now a very strumpet, and so has lost all her life and spirit, or rather a common strumpet, passes herself upon the world for the chaste heaven-born virgin. All my other letters from this, if you will favour me with an answer, shall smell of the country. I need not tell you, I have a most affectionate regard for you, and it will give me as real a satisfaction to hear from you as any man: it will be a great pleasure to me likewise to hear of Mr. Rickerton's welfare, who deserves encouragement as much as any preacher in Scotland. Misjohn and his horse also would make a very good paragraph: give my service to them both; to Mrs. and Miss Cranston, John, &c. Yours sincerely,

J. THOMSON.

I can not be certain whether Sir William Bennet has lost post or not. Your country news, though they may seem trifling, yet will be acceptable to me. My brother will readily wait upon you, who is just now setting up at Kelso.

The letter to Dr. Cranston in the Memoir,* to which the date September 1726 is assigned, was evidently the next communication to him, and must have been written in September 1725. "Winter" appeared in the March following, that is, March 1726, instead of March 1726-7.†

Notwithstanding that Thomson himself says that the idea of writing "Winter" was suggested by another poem on the same subject,‡ yet Warton states, in one of his notes on Pope, "My friend Mr. William Collins, author of the Persian Eclogues and Odes, assured me that Thomson informed him that he took the first hint and idea of writing his Seasons from the titles of Pope's four Pastorals." Warton adds, in another place, "when Thomson published his Winter in 1726, it lay a long time neglected, till Mr. Spence made honourable mention of it in his Essay on the Odyssey; which, becoming a popular book, made the poem universally known. Thomson always acknowledged the use of this recommendation; and from this circumstance an intimacy commenced between the critic and the poet, which lasted till the lamented death of the latter, who was of a most amiable and benevolent temper. I have before me

* Memoir, p. vii

* Memoir, p. v. † Ibid. p. vi. ‡ Ibid. p. vi.

a letter of Mr. Spence to Pitt, earnestly begging him to subscribe to the quarto edition of Thomson's Seasons, and mentioning a design which Thomson had formed of writing a descriptive poem on Blenheim; a subject that would have shone in his hands."

A letter from Thomson to Cranston corroborates the statement that his brother John came to London, but that being attacked by a consumption he returned for the benefit of his native air.* It appears that he arrived in London before 1734, returned early in August 1735, and died in September following. That letter is of interest, not only from the fraternal kindness which it evinces, but from the notice of his pecuniary affairs and expectations, and of his poem of "Liberty," three parts of which were at that time published. His acquaintance with Mr. Lyttelton seems to have been then very slight, even if he was at all known to him.

DEAR SIR, *London, August the 7th*, 1735.

THE bearer hereof, my brother, was seized last spring with a severe cold, which seems to have fallen upon his lungs, and has reduced him to such a low condition, that his physician here advises him to try what his native air can do, as the only remaining means of recovery. In his present melancholy circumstances, it gives me no small satisfaction to think that he will have the benefit of your directions: and for me to spend more words in recommending him to your care were, I flatter myself, a superfluous formality. Your old acquaintance Anderson attends him; and besides what is necessary to defray the expenses of their journey, I have only given my brother five guineas; choosing rather to remit him the money he will afterwards want, which shall be done upon the first notice.

My brother's illness puts me in mind of that which afflicted you some years ago; and it is with the sincerest pleasure that I reflect on your recovery: your health I hope is perfectly established; health being the life of life. I will not make you the compliments which I justly could upon that subject; the sentiments of the heart are generally plain, and mine rejoices in your welfare.

Should you inquire into my circumstances: They blossomed pretty well of late, the Chancellor having given me the office of Secretary of the Briefs under him: but the blight of an idle inquiry into the fees and offices of the courts of justice, which arose of late, seems to threaten its destruction. In that case I am to hope amends: to be reduced, however, from enjoyment to hope, will be but an awkward affair—awkward or not, hope and I (I hope) shall never part. Hope is the breath in the nostrils of happiness, when that goes this dies. But then one ought at the same time to distinguish betwixt the fair star of hope, and that meteor, court-expectation. With regard to the last, I subscribe to a new Beatitude of Pope's or Swift's I think it is—Blessed is he who expecteth nothing, for he shall never be disappointed.

You will see by the three first parts of a poem called Liberty, which I send you, that I still attempt the barren but delightful mountain of Parnassus. I have poured into it several of those ideas which I gathered in my travels and particularly from classic ground. It is to consist of two parts more, which I design to publish next winter. Not quite to tantalize you, I send you likewise some of the best things that have been printed here of late, among which Mr. Pope's second volume of miscellanies is eminent, and in it his Essay on Man. The first volume of his Miscellany Poems was printed long ago, and is every where. His Letters were piratically printed by the infamous Curl. Though Mr. Pope be much concerned at their being printed, yet are they full of wit, humour, good sense, and what is best of all, a good heart. One Mr. Lyttelton, a young gentleman, and member of parliament, wrote the Persian Letters. They are reckoned prettily done. The book on the Sacrament is writ by Hoadly, Bishop of Winchester. All bigots roar against it, consequently it will work your Misjohns. I wish I could send you more entertainment of this kind: but a new gothic night seems approaching, the great year, the millenium of dulness.

Believe me most affectionately yours,
J. THOMSON.

Remember me kindly to friends, and direct to me, should you favour me with a letter, at the Lancaster Coffee House, Lancaster Court, in the Strand, London.

Dr. Cranston informed him of the death of his brother, in a letter dated on the 23d of September, but he did not reply to it until the 20th of October, as it did not come to his hands sooner, in consequence of being on a visit to Mr. Bubb Dodington, to whom he dedicated his "Spring," at Eastbury, in Dorsetshire. His reflections on death are well expressed, and the allusion to his own ideas of a future state of happiness, that it consists in a progressive increase of beatitude, is deserving of attention. This letter is valuable also, because it contains some lines on the death of his young friend, Mr. Talbot,* which were intended for insertion in "Liberty," instead of those which occur.

DEAR SIR,

Being but lately returned from Mr. Dodington's seat, in Dorsetshire, I only received yours of Sep-

* Memoir, p. xxv

* Memoir, p. x.

tember the 23d, a few days ago. The account it brought me of my brother's death, I was pretty much prepared against, considering the almost hopeless condition he had for some time been in. What you mention is the true point of view wherein to place the death of relations and friends. They then are past our regret: the living are to be lamented, and not the dead. And this is so true and natural, that people when they grieve for the death of those they love, from a principle of compassion for the departed, without a return upon themselves, they envisage them in the article of death, and under the pains both real and imagined thereof; that is to say, they grieve for them whilst they were alive. Death is a limit which human passions ought not, but with great caution and reverence to pass. Nor, indeed, can they easily pass that limit, since beyond it things are not clearly and distinctly enough perceived formally to excite them. This, I think, we may be sure of, that a future state must be better than this; and so on through the never-ceasing succession of future states; every one rising upon the last, an everlasting new display of infinite goodness! But hereby hangs a system, not calculated perhaps for the meridian where you live, though for that of your own mind, and too long to be explained in a letter. I will conclude these thoughts by giving you some lines of a copy of verses I wrote on my friend, Mr. Talbot's death, and designed at first to be prefixed to LIBERTY, but afterwards reduced to those you see stand there. Perhaps some time or other I may publish the whole.

Be then the startling tear,
Or selfish, or mistaken, wiped away.
By death the good, from reptile matter raised,
And upward soaring to superior day,
With pity hear our plaints, with pity see
Our ignorance of tears; if e'er indeed,
Amid the woes of life, they quench their joys.
Why should we cloud a friend's exalted state
With idle grief, tenaciously prolonged
Beyond the lovely drops that frailty sheds,
Surprised? No, rather thence less fond of life,
Yet still the lot enjoying heaven allows,
Attend we, cheerful, the rejoining hour,
Children of nature! let us not reject,
Froward, the good we have for what we want.
Since all by turns must spread the sable sail,
Driven to the coast that never makes return,
But where we happy hope to meet again;
Sooner or later, a few anxious years,
Still fluttering on the wing, not much imports.
Eternal Goodness reigns: be this our stay;
A subject for the past of grateful song,
And for the future of undrooping hope.

Every thing, it seems, is a subject of contention in this interested world. Let his effects be all given to his cousin, Thomas Turnbull, who so kindly attended him in his illness. Only his great coat, jockey coat, I mean, may be given to David of Minto, since he, I hear, desires it. Very likely he took it amiss that my brother was not lodged with him, but my aunt of Chesters I thought more proper to tend and soften his sickness, she being a very good tender-hearted woman. Let her son Thomas therefore have all his effects, except it be the aforesaid jockey coat. I shall be glad besides to render them all other service.

Please to let me know to whom I shall pay what is due upon my brother's account. Your goodness on this occasion gives me no new sentiment of satisfaction; it is what I have been long acquainted with. If you would still add to your obligations, lay freely your commands upon me whenever I can be of any service to you.

There are no news here. The king is expected this week. A battle likewise is by some expected; we hungered and thirsted after .... Seckendorf and Belle-Isle. But the French and Germans seem to have fought enough last campaign in Italy, to excuse them for this. The gallant French this year have made war upon the Germans, I beg their politeness's pardon, like vermin—eat them up. Hang them all. If they make war it is to rob, if peace to cheat one another. Such are the noble dispositions of mankind at present. But before I fall into a bad humour I will take my leave of you, being always,

My dear friend,
Your most affectionate humble servant,
JAMES THOMSON.

London, Oct. 20th, 1735.

Pray remember me kindly to all friends.

To the remark,* that a material difference exists between "The Seasons" as they first appeared and as they now stand, it ought to have been added that Dr. Bell, Thomson's nephew, meditated a variorum edition of that work. In a letter to Lord Buchan, in June 1791, he says,

"In the improved edition of Spring are added 85 lines, in Summer 599, in Autumn 96, and in Winter 188, making a total of 968 lines."

In another letter to Lord Buchan, written in September, 1791, Dr. Bell observes:

"I have begun to collate the Seasons—the edition 1730 with that of 1744. As I proceed in the work, I have more and more reason to think that my labour will not be unworthy the attention of the public. A great many beautiful passages in the edition of 1730 are entirely struck out of all subsequent editions, and the other alterations made are considerable, far more than I had any conception of previous to collating them with accuracy. The improvements made on the edition 1744 will be taken notice of; they are highly important."

* Memoir, p. viii.

Dr. Bell did not execute his design, but a duodecimo edition of the Seasons was published by Sibbald, at Edinburgh, in 1789, containing, at the end, the variations between the last and previous impressions.

Johnson's remark on the alteration and curtailment made by Lord Lyttelton in "Liberty" was too hastily repeated in the Memoir,* for it was afterwards discovered that there is not the slightest ground for it. This had also occurred to Dr. Bell, who says, in one of his letters to Lord Buchan:

"I am at a loss to understand what Dr. Johnson means by saying, in his Life of Thomson, that Sir George Lyttelton shortened the poem of Liberty. I have just now before me the edition of Liberty, printed by Millar, 1735-1736, and, instead of abridgments after this, find that above two dozen of lines have been added, twelve to part first, ten to part second, and one to part third. Your lordship might, perhaps, be able to detect whether that arch-hypercritic be right or wrong. I suspect he is in a mistake, but have no good reason for saying so, save the opinion I have of the presumption and arrogance of the man."

An edition of Milton's "Areopagitica" was published about 1740, to which Thomson wrote the preface.

The "Amanda" of Thomson was Miss Elizabeth Young, who married Vice Admiral John Campbell; and the late Mr. Coutts, in reply to an inquiry of Lord Buchan in 1792, stated, that the late Admiral Campbell was his "most intimate and worthy friend," adding, "Mrs. Campbell was certainly the Amanda of Thomson, and he wished to have married her, but his want of fortune proved a bar in the way of their union."†

There is reason to believe that a fragment of a poem was found amongst Thomson's papers, as Dr. Bell remarks, in his letter to Lord Buchan, in September, 1791:

"I remember to have heard my aunt, Mrs. Thomson, say, that the outlines of a fine poem were found among her brother's papers after his death. If this was the case, Mr. Gray, of Richmond Hill, got possession of them. The heirs of that gentleman will be able to ascertain the fact; and to put it in my power, if they are worthy of Thomson's character, to give them to the public. Your lordship has taken so much trouble in this little plan of mine, that I am ashamed to throw out this hint."

Elizabeth, the Poet's second sister, who married the Reverend Robert Bell,* was, according to her son, Dr. Bell, "the favourite and best beloved sister of Caledonia's bard."

An original picture of Thomson, by Slaughter, is preserved at Dryburgh Abbey, the seat of Lord Buchan. It belonged to the Poet, and hung in the room he used at Slaughter's Coffee-house. On the back is this inscription, in his Lordship's hand writing:

"Procured for the Earl of Buchan by his friend, Richard Cooper, Esq., engraver. Thomson and his friends, Dr. Anderson, Peter Murdoch, &c. used to frequent old Slaughter's Coffee-house, London, and his portrait was painted at that time by Slaughter, a kinsman of old Slaughter.

Dec 3, 1812. BUCHAN."

His Lordship's seal is added. This portrait has been engraved.

A monument to Thomson has been at length erected on an eminence, about half way between Kelso and Ednam, but the only admiration it is likely to excite is for the motives of those to whom it owes its existence. Taste is rarer even than money; and it is lamentable to reflect that, however calculated the monuments in this country, to departed greatness, may be to exalt the fame of the deceased, they have a contrary effect upon the reputation of the person who superintended their erection.

PREFACE,

BY THOMSON, PREFIXED TO THE SECOND EDITION OF WINTER, 1726.

I AM neither ignorant nor concerned how much one may suffer in the opinion of several persons of great gravity and character by the study and pursuit of poetry.

Although there may seem to be some appearance of reason for the present contempt of it, as managed by the most part of our modern writers, yet that any man should, seriously, declare against that divine art is really amazing. It is declaring against the most charming power of imagination, the most exalting force of thought, the most affecting touch of sentiment; in a word, against the very soul of all learning and politeness. It is affronting

* P. xi.

† In the same letter Mr. Coutts thus speaks of Thomson's intimate friend, Dr. Armstrong: "Mr. Dundas can find nothing of Dr. Armstrong. What a pity almost all that worthy man and elegant judicious poet's works have been lost, or fallen a sacrifice in the fire to his delicacy of mind. He had so correct a taste, and so clear a judgment, that he was never pleased in the morning with what he had written over night. And when he went to Germany, in the army, he packed up a number of things in a portmanteau, which he left in careless hands, and it was lost: also in Germany, upon some alarm from the enemy, he lost another portmanteau, which, I am persuaded, contained many valuable things."

* Memoir, p. xxii.

the universal taste of mankind, and declaring against what has charmed the listening world from Moses down to Milton. In fine, it is even declaring against the sublimest passages of the inspired writings themselves, and what seems to be the peculiar language of Heaven.

The truth of the case is this: these weak-sighted gentlemen can not bear the strong light of poetry, and the finer and more amusing scene of things it displays; but must those, therefore, whom Heaven has blessed with the discerning eye, shut it to keep them company?

It is pleasant enough, however, to observe, frequently, in these enemies of poetry, an awkward imitation of it. They sometimes have their little brightnesses, when the opening glooms will permit. Nay, I have seen their heaviness, on some occasions, deign to turn friskish and witty, in which they make just such another figure as Æsop's Ass, when he began to fawn. To complete the absurdity they would, even in their efforts against poetry, fain be poetical; like those gentlemen that reason with a great deal of zeal and severity against reason.

That there are frequent and notorious abuses of poetry is as true as that the best things are most liable to that misfortune; but is there no end of that clamorous argument against the use of things from the abuse of them? And yet I hope that no man, who has the least sense of shame in him, will fall into it after the present sulphureous attacker of the stage.

To insist no further on this head, let poetry once more be restored to her ancient truth and purity; let her be inspired from heaven; and, in return, her incense ascend thither: let her exchange her low, venal, trifling subjects for such as are fair, useful, and magnificent; and let her execute these so as at once to please, instruct, surprise, and astonish; and then, of necessity, the most inveterate ignorance and prejudice shall be struck dumb, and poets yet become the delight and wonder of mankind.

But this happy period is not to be expected till some long-wished illustrious man, of equal power and beneficence, rise on the wintry world of letters; one of a genuine and unbounded greatness and generosity of mind; who, far above all the pomp and pride of fortune, scorns the little, addressful flatterer, pierces through the disguised designing villain, discountenances all the reigning fopperies of a tasteless age, and who, stretching his views into late futurity, has the true interest of virtue, learning, and mankind entirely at heart. A character, so nobly desirable! that, to an honest heart, it is almost incredible so few should have the ambition to deserve it.

Nothing can have a better influence towards the revival of poetry than the choosing of great and serious subjects, such as at once amuse the fancy, enlighten the head, and warm the heart. These give a weight and dignity to the poem, nor is the pleasure, I should say rapture, both the writer and the reader feels, unwarranted by reason, or followed by repentant disgust. To be able to write on a dry, barren theme, is looked upon by some as the sign of a happy, fruitful, genius—fruitful indeed! like one of the pendent gardens in Cheapside, watered every morning by the hand of the alderman himself. And what are we commonly entertained with on these occasions, save forced, unaffecting fancies, little, glittering prettinesses, mixed turns of wit and expression, which are as widely different from native poetry as buffoonery is from the perfection of human thinking. A genius fired with the charms of truth and nature is tuned to a sublimer pitch, and scorns to associate with such subjects.

I can not more emphatically recommend this poetical ambition than by the four following lines from Mr. Hill's poem, called The Judgment Day, which is so singular an instance of it.

> For me, suffice it to have taught my muse
> The tuneful triflings of her tribe to shun;
> And raised her warmth such heavenly themes to choose,
> As, in past ages, the best garlands won.

I know no subject more elevated, more amusing, more ready to awake the poetical enthusiasm, the philosophical reflection, and the moral sentiment than the works of Nature. Where can we meet with such variety, such beauty, such magnificence? All that enlarges and transports the soul? What more inspiring than a calm, wide survey of them? In every dress Nature is greatly charming! whether she puts on the crimson robes of the morning! the strong effulgence of noon! the sober suit of the evening! or the deep sables of blackness and tempest! How gay looks the Spring! how glorious the Summer! how pleasing the Autumn! and how venerable the Winter!—But there is no thinking of these things without breaking out into poetry, which is, by the by, a plain and undeniable argument of their superior excellence.

For this reason the best, both ancient and modern, poets have been passionately fond of retirement and solitude. The wild romantic country was their delight. And they seem never to have been more happy than when lost in unfrequented fields, far from the little busy world, they were at leisure to meditate, and sing the works of Nature.

The Book of Job, that noble and ancient poem, which even strikes so forcibly through a mangling translation, is crowned with a description of the grand works of Nature, and that, too, from the mouth of their Almighty Author.

It was this devotion to the works of Nature, that, in his Georgics, inspired the rural Virgil to write

so inimitably; and who can forbear joining with him in this declaration of his, which has been the rapture of ages?

Me vero primum dulces ante omnia Musæ,
Quarum sacra fero ingenti perculsus amore,
Accipiant; Cœlique vias et sidera monstrent,
Defectus solis varios, lunæque labores:
Unde tremor terris: qua vi maria alta tumescant
Obicibus ruptis, rursusque in seipsa residant:
Quid tantum oceano properent se tingere soles
Hyberni: vel quæ tardis mora noctibus obstat.
Sin, has ne possim naturæ accedere partes,
Frigidus obstiterit circum præcordia sanguis;
Rura mihi et rigui placeant in valibus amnis
Flumina amem silvasque inglorius.

Which may be Englished thus:

Me may the Muses, my supreme delight!
Whose priest I am, smit with immense desire,
Snatch to their care; the starry tracts disclose,
The sun's distress, the labours of the moon;
Whence the earth quakes; and by what force the deeps
Heave at the rocks, then on themselves reflow.
Why winter-suns to plunge in ocean speed;
And what retards the lazy summer-night.
But, lest I should these mystic truths attain,
If the cold current freezes round my heart,
The country me, the brooky vales may please
Mid woods and streams unknown.

I can not put an end to this Preface without taking the freedom to offer my most sincere and grateful acknowledgments to all those gentlemen who have given my first performance so favourable a reception.

It is with the best pleasure, and a rising ambition, that I reflect on the honour Mr. Hill has done me in recommending my poem to the world after a manner so peculiar to himself, than whom none approves and obliges with a nobler and more unreserving promptitude of soul. His favours are the very smiles of humanity, graceful and easy, flowing from and to the heart. This agreeable train of thought awakens naturally in my mind all the other parts of his great and amiable character, which I know not well how to quit, and yet dare not here pursue.

Every reader who has a heart to be moved, must feel the most gentle power of poetry in the lines with which Mira has graced my poem.

It perhaps might be reckoned vanity in me, to say how richly I value the approbation of a gentleman of Mr. Malloch's fine and exact taste, so justly dear and valuable to all those that have the happiness of knowing him; and who, to say no more of him, will abundantly make good to the world the early promise his admired piece of William and Margaret has given.

I only wish my description of the various appearance of Nature in Winter, and, as I purpose, in the other Seasons, may have the good fortune to give the reader some of that true pleasure which they, in their agreeable succession, are always sure to inspire into my heart.

COMMENDATORY VERSES.

TO MR. THOMSON,

DOUBTFUL TO WHAT PATRON HE SHOULD ADDRESS HIS POEM CALLED WINTER.

SOME peers, perhaps, have skill to judge, 'tis true;
Yet no mean prospect bounds the Muse's view.
Firm in your native strength, thus nobly shown,
Slight such delusive props, and stand alone;
Fruitless dependance oft has found too late
That greatness rarely dwells among the great.
Patrons are Nature's nobles, not the state's,
And wit's a title no broad seal creates:
E'en kings, from whose high source all honours flow,
Are poor in power when they would souls bestow

Heedless of fortune then look down on state,
Balanced within by reason's conscious weight:
Divinely proud of independent will,
Prince of your passions, live their sovereign still.
He who stoops safe beneath a patron's shade
Shines, like the moon, but by another's aid;
Free truth should open, and unbias'd steer,
Strong as heaven's heat, and as its brightness clear.

O, swell not then the bosoms of the vain
With false conceit that you protection gain;
Poets, like you, their own protectors stand,
Placed above aid from pride's inferior hand.
Time, that devours the lord's unlasting name,
Shall lend her soundless depth to float your fame.

On verse like yours no smiles from power expect,
Born with a worth that doomed you to neglect;
Yet, would your wit be noised, reflect no more,
Let the smooth veil of flattery silk you o'er;
Aptly attach'd the court's soft climate try,
Learn your pen's duty from your patron's eye.
Ductile of soul, each pliant purpose wind,
And, tracing interest close, leave doubt behind:
Then shall your name strike loud the public ear;
For through good fortune virtue's self shines clear.

But, in defiance of our taste to charm!
And fancy's force with judgment's caution arm!
Disturb, with busy thought, so lull'd an age!
And plant strong meanings o'er the peaceful page!
Impregnate sound with sense! teach nature art!
And warm e'en Winter till it thaws the heart!
How could you thus your country's rules transgress,
Yet think of patrons, and presume success?

A. HILL.

TO MR. THOMSON,

ON HIS BLOOMING WINTER.

Oh gaudy summer, veil thy blushing head,
Dull is thy sun, and all thy beauties dead;
From thy short nights, and noisy mirthful day,
My kindling thoughts, disdainful, turn away.

Majestic Winter with his floods appears,
And o'er the world his awful terrors rears:
From north to south his train dispreading slow,
Blue frost, bleak rain, and fleecy-footed snow.

In thee, sad Winter, I a kindred find,
Far more related to poor human kind;
To thee my gently drooping head I bend,
Thy sigh my sister, and thy tear my friend;
On thee I muse, and in thy hastening sun,
See life expiring ere 'tis well begun.

Thy sickening ray and venerable gloom
Shows life's last scene, the solitary tomb;
But thou art safe, so shaded by the bays,
Immortal in the noblest poet's praise;
From time and death he will thy beauties save;
Oh may such numbers weep o'er Mira's grave!
Secure and glorious would her ashes lie,
Till Nature fade—and all the Seasons die.

MIRA.

TO MR. THOMSON,

ON HIS PUBLISHING THE SECOND EDITION OF HIS POEM, CALLED WINTER.

Charm'd and instructed by thy powerful song,
I have, unjust, withheld my thanks too long;
This debt of gratitude at length receive,
Warmly sincere, 'tis all thy friend can give.

Thy worth new lights the poet's darken'd name,
And shows it, blazing, in the brightest fame.
Through all thy various Winter full are found,
Magnificence of thought and pomp of sound,
Clear depth of sense, expression's heightening grace,
And goodness, eminent in power and place!
For this, the wise, the knowing few commend
With zealous joy—for thou art virtue's friend:
Even age and truth severe, in reading thee,
That Heaven inspire's the muse, convinced agree.

Thus I dare sing of merit faintly known,
Friendless—supported by itself alone:
For those whose aided will could lift thee high
In fortune, see not with discernment's eye.
Nor place nor power bestows the sight refined,
And wealth enlarges not the narrow mind.

How couldst thou think of such and write so well?
Or hope reward by daring to excel!
Unskilful of the age! untaught to gain
Those favours which the fawning base obtain!
A thousand shameful arts to thee unknown,
Falsehood and flattery must be first thy own.
If thy loved country lingers in thy breast,
Thou must drive out the unprofitable guest;
Extinguish each bright aim that kindles there,
And centre in thyself thy every care.

But hence that vileness—pleased to charm mankind,
Cast each low thought of interest far behind:
Neglected into noble scorn—away
From that worn path where vulgar poets stray;
Inglorious herd! profuse of venal lays!
And by the pride despised, they stoop to praise!
Thou, careless of the statesman's smile or frown,
Tread that straight way that leads to fair renown.
By virtue guided, and by glory fired,
And by reluctant envy slow admired,
Dare to do well, and in thy boundless mind
Embrace the general welfare of thy kind;
Enrich them with the treasures of thy thought,
What Heaven approves and what the Muse has taught,
Where thy power fails, unable to go on,
Ambitious, greatly will the good undone.
So shall thy name, through ages, brightening shine,
And distant praise from worth unborn be thine:
So shalt thou, happy! merit Heaven's regard,
And find a glorious, though a late reward.

D. MALLOCH.

THE

POETICAL WORKS

OF

JAMES THOMSON.

THE SEASONS.

Spring.

Et nunc omnis ager, nunc omnis parturit arbos,
Nunc frondent silvæ, nunc formosissimus annus.— *Virg*

ARGUMENT.

The subject proposed. Inscribed to the Countess of Hertford. The Season is described as it affects the various parts of Nature, ascending from the lower to the higher; with digressions arising from the subject. Its influence on inanimate Matter, on Vegetables, on brute Animals, and last on Man; concluding with a dissuasive from the wild and irregular passion of Love, opposed to that of a pure and happy kind.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
THE COUNTESS OF HERTFORD.

MADAM,

I HAVE always observed that, in addresses of this nature, the general taste of the world demands ingenious turns of wit, and disguised artful periods, instead of an open sincerity of sentiment flowing in a plain expression. From what secret impatience of the justest praise, when bestowed on others, this often proceeds, rather than a pretended delicacy, is beyond my purpose here to inquire. But as nothing is more foreign to the disposition of a soul sincerely pleased with the contemplation of what is beautiful, and excellent, than wit and turn; I have too much respect for your Ladyship's character, either to touch it in that gay, trifling manner, or venture on a particular detail of those truly amiable qualities of which it is composed. A mind exalted, pure, and elegant, a heart overflowing with humanity, and the whole train of virtues thence derived, that give a pleasing spirit to conversation, an engaging simplicity to the manners, and form the life to harmony, are rather to be felt, and silently admired, than expressed. I have attempted, in the following Poem, to paint some of the most tender beauties and delicate appearances of nature; how much in vain, your Ladyship's taste will, I am afraid, but too soon discover: yet would it still be a much easier task to find expression for all that variety of colour, form, and fragrance, which enrich the season I describe, than to speak the many nameless graces and native riches of a mind capable so much at once to relish solitude, and adorn society. To whom then could these sheets be more properly inscribed than to you, Madam, whose influence in the world can give them the protection they want, while your fine imagination, and intimate acquaintance with rural nature, will recommend them with the greatest advantage to your favourable notice? Happy! if I hit any of those images, and correspondent sentiments, your calm evening walks, in the most delightful retirement, have oft inspired. I could add too, that as this Poem grew up under your encouragement, it has therefore a natural claim to your patronage. Should you read it with approbation, its music shall not droop; and should it have the good fortune to deserve your smiles, its roses shall not wither. But, where the subject is so tempting, lest I begin my Poem before the Dedication is ended, I here break short, and beg leave to subscribe myself, with the highest respect,

Madam,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

JAMES THOMSON.

SPRING.

COME, gentle Spring! ethereal Mildness! come,
And from the bosom of yon dropping cloud,
While music wakes around, veil'd in a shower
Of shadowing roses, on our plains descend.
O Hertford, fitted or to shine in courts
With unaffected grace, or walk the plain
With innocence and meditation join'd
In soft assemblage, listen to my song,
Which thy own Season paints; when Nature all
Is blooming and benevolent, like thee.

And see where surly Winter passes off,
Far to the north, and calls his ruffian blasts:
His blasts obey, and quit the howling hill,
The shatter'd forest, and the ravaged vale;
While softer gales succeed, at whose kind touch,
Dissolving snows in livid torrents lost,
The mountains lift their green heads to the sky.
As yet the trembling year is unconfirm'd,
And Winter oft at eve resumes the breeze,
Chills the pale morn, and bids his driving sleets
Deform the day delightless: so that scarce
The bittern knows his time, with bill ingulf'd,
To shake the sounding marsh; or from the shore
The plovers when to scatter o'er the heath,
And sing their wild notes to the listening waste.
At last from Aries rolls the bounteous sun,
And the bright Bull receives him. Then no more
The expansive atmosphere is cramp'd with cold;
But, full of life and vivifying soul,
Lifts the light clouds sublime, and spreads them thin,
Fleecy, and white, o'er all-surrounding heaven.
Forth fly the tepid airs: and unconfined,
Unbinding earth, the moving softness strays.
Joyous, the impatient husbandman perceives
Relenting Nature, and his lusty steers
Drives from their stalls, to where the well used plough
Lies in the furrow, loosen'd from the frost.
There, unrefusing, to the harness'd yoke
They lend their shoulders, and begin their toil,
Cheer'd by the simple song and soaring lark.
Meanwhile incumbent o'er the shining share
The master leans, removes the obstructing clay,
Winds the whole work, and sidelong lays the glebe.
While through the neighbouring fields the sower stalks,
With measured steps, and liberal throws the grain
Into the fruitful bosom of the ground;
The harrow follows harsh, and shuts the scene.
Be gracious, Heaven! for now laborious Man
Has done his part. Ye fostering breezes, blow!
Ye softening dews, ye tender showers, descend!
And temper all, thou world-reviving sun,
Into the perfect year! Nor ye who live
In luxury and ease, in pomp and pride,
Think these lost themes unworthy of your ear:
Such themes as these the rural Maro sung
To wide-imperial Rome, in the full height
Of elegance and taste, by Greece refined.
In ancient times the sacred plough employ'd
The kings and awful fathers of mankind:
And some, with whom compared your insect-tribes
Are but the beings of a summer's day,
Have held the scale of empire, ruled the storm
Of mighty war; then, with unwearied hand,
Disdaining little delicacies seized
The plough, and greatly independent lived.
Ye generous Britons, venerate the plough!
And o'er your hills, and long withdrawing vales,
Let Autumn spread his treasures to the sun,
Luxuriant and unbounded: as the sea,
Far through his azure turbulent domain,
Your empire owns, and from a thousand shores
Wafts all the pomp of life into your ports;
So with superior boon may your rich soil,
Exuberant, Nature's better blessings pour
O'er every land, the naked nations clothe,
And be the exhaustless granary of a world!
Nor only through the lenient air this change,
Delicious, breathes; the penetrative sun,
His force deep-darting to the dark retreat
Of vegetation, sets the streaming Power
At large, to wander o'er the verdant earth,
In various hues; but chiefly thee, gay green!
Thou smiling Nature's universal robe!
United light and shade! where the sight dwells
With growing strength, and ever-new delight.
From the moist meadow to the wither'd hill,
Led by the breeze, the vivid verdure runs,
And swells, and deepens, to the cherish'd eye.
The hawthorn whitens; and the juicy groves
Put forth their buds, unfolding by degrees,
Till the whole leafy forest stands display'd,
In full luxuriance to the sighing gales;
Where the deer rustle through the twining brake
And the birds sing conceal'd. At once array'd
In all the colours of the flushing year,
By Nature's swift and secret working hand,
The garden glows, and fills the liberal air
With lavish fragrance; while the promised fruit
Lies yet a little embryo, unperceived,
Within its crimson folds. Now from the town
Buried in smoke, and sleep, and noisome damps,
Oft let me wander o'er the dewy fields,
Where freshness breathes, and dash the trembling drops,
From the bent bush, as through the verdant maze
Of sweetbriar hedges I pursue my walk;
Or taste the smell of dairy; or ascend
Some eminence, Augusta, in thy plains,
And see the country, far diffused around,
One boundless blush, one white-empurpled shower
Of mingled blossoms; where the raptured eye
Hurries from joy to joy, and, hid beneath
The fair profusion, yellow Autumn spies.
If, brush'd from Russian wilds, a cutting gale
Rise not, and scatter from his humid wings
The clammy mildew; or, dry-blowing, breathe
Untimely frost; before whose baleful blast
The full-blown Spring through all her foliage shrinks,
Joyless and dead, a wide-dejected waste.
For oft, engender'd by the hazy north,
Myriads on myriads, insect armies warp
Keen in the poison'd breeze; and wasteful eat,

Through buds and bark, into the blacken'd core,
Their eager way. A feeble race! yet oft
The sacred sons of vengeance; on whose course
Corrosive Famine waits, and kills the year.
To check this plague, the skilful farmer chaff
And blazing straw before his orchard burns;
Till, all involved in smoke, the latent foe
From every cranny suffocated falls:
Or scatters o'er the blooms the pungent dust
Of pepper, fatal to the frosty tribe:
Or, when the envenom'd leaf begins to curl,
With sprinkled water drowns them in their nest;
Nor, while they pick them up with busy bill,
The little trooping birds unwisely scares.
Be patient, swains; these cruel seeming winds
Blow not in vain. Far hence they keep repress'd
Those deepening clouds on clouds, surcharged with rain,
That o'er the vast Atlantic hither borne,
In endless train, would quench the summer-blaze,
And, cheerless, drown the crude unripen'd year.
The north-east spends his rage; he now shut up
Within his iron cave, the effusive south
Warms the wide air, and o'er the void of Heaven
Breathes the big clouds with vernal showers distent.
At first a dusky wreath they seem to rise,
Scarce staining ether; but by swift degrees,
In heaps on heaps, the doubling vapour sails
Along the loaded skies, and mingling deep
Sits on the horizon round a settled gloom:
Not such as wintry-storms on mortals shed,
Oppressing life; but lovely, gentle, kind,
And full of every hope and every joy,
The wish of Nature. Gradual sinks the breeze
Into a perfect calm; that not a breath
Is heard to quiver through the closing woods,
Or rustling turn the many-twinkling leaves
Of aspin tall. Th' uncurling floods, diffused
In glassy breadth, seem through delusive lapse
Forgetful of their course. 'Tis silence all
And pleasing expectation. Herds and flocks
Drop the dry sprig, and mute-imploring eye
The falling verdure. Hush'd in short suspense,
The plumy people streak their wings with oil,
To throw the lucid moisture trickling off:
And wait the approaching sign to strike, at once,
Into the general choir. E'en mountains, vales,
And forests, seem, impatient, to demand
The promised sweetness. Man superior walks
Amid the glad creation, musing praise,
And looking lively gratitude. At last,
The clouds consign their treasures to the fields;
And, softly shaking on the dimpled pool
Prelusive drops, let all their moisture flow,
In large effusion, o'er the freshen'd world.
The stealing shower is scarce to patter heard,
By such as wander through the forest walks,
Beneath the umbrageous multitude of leaves.
But who can hold the shade, while Heaven descends
In universal bounty, shedding herbs,
And fruits, and flowers, on Nature's ample lap?
Swift fancy fired anticipates their growth;
And, while the milky nutriment distils,
Beholds the kindling country colour round.
Thus all day long the full-distended clouds
Indulge their genial stores, and well-shower'd earth
Is deep enrich'd with vegetable life;
Till, in the western sky, the downward sun
Looks out, effulgent, from amidst the flush
Of broken clouds, gay-shifting to his beam.
The rapid radiance instantaneous strikes
The illumined mountain, through the forest streams,
Shakes on the floods, and in the yellow mist,
Far smoking o'er the interminable plain,
In twinkling myriads lights the dewy gems.
Moist, bright, and green, the landscape laughs around.
Full swell the woods; their every music wakes,
Mix'd in wild concert with the warbling brooks
Increased, the distant bleatings of the hills,
And hollow lows responsive from the vales,
Whence blending all the sweeten'd zephyr springs.
Meantime, refracted from yon eastern cloud,
Bestriding earth, the grand ethereal bow
Shoots up immense; and every hue unfolds,
In fair proportion, running from the red
To where the violet fades into the sky.
Here, awful Newton, the dissolving clouds
Form, fronting on the sun, thy showery prism;
And to the sage instructed eye unfold
The various twine of light, by thee disclosed
From the white mingling maze. Not so the boy;
He wondering views the bright enchantment bend,
Delightful o'er the radiant fields, and runs
To catch the falling glory; but amazed
Beholds the amusive arch before him fly,
Then vanish quite away. Still night succeeds,
A softened shade, and saturated earth
Awaits the morning beam, to give to light,
Raised through ten thousand different plastic tubes,
The balmy treasures of the former day.
Then spring the living herbs, profusely wild,
O'er all the deep green earth, beyond the power
Of botanist to number up their tribes:
Whether he steals along the lonely dale,
In silent search; or through the forest, rank
With what the dull incurious weeds account,
Bursts his blind way; or climbs the mountain rock,
Fired by the nodding verdure of its brow.
With such a liberal hand has nature flung
Their seeds abroad blown them about in winds,

Innumerous mix'd them with the nursing mould,
The moistening current, and prolific rain.
But who their virtues can declare? who pierce,
With vision pure, into these secret stores
Of health, and life, and joy? the food of Man,
While yet he lived in innocence, and told
A length of golden years; unflesh'd in blood,
A stranger to the savage arts of life,
Death, rapine, carnage, surfeit, and disease;
The lord, and not the tyrant, of the world.
The first fresh dawn then waked the gladden'd race
Of uncorrupted Man, nor blush'd to see
The sluggard sleep beneath its sacred beam;
For their light slumbers gently fumed away;
And up they rose as vigorous as the sun,
Or to the culture of the willing glebe,
Or to the cheerful tendance of the flock.
Meantime the song went round; and dance and sport,
Wisdom and friendly talk, successive, stole
Their hours away: while in the rosy vale
Love breath'd his infant sighs, from anguish free,
And full replete with bliss; save the sweet pain,
That inly thrilling, but exalts it more.
Not yet injurious act, nor surly deed,
Was known among those happy sons of Heaven;
For reason and benevolence were law.
Harmonious Nature too look'd smiling on.
Clear shone the skies, cool'd with eternal gales,
And balmy spirit all. The youthful sun
Shot his best rays, and still the gracious clouds
Dropp'd fatness down; as o'er the swelling mead
The herds and flocks, commixing, play'd secure.
This when, emergent from the gloomy wood,
The glaring lion saw, his horrid heart
Was meeken'd, and he join'd his sullen joy;
For music held the whole in perfect peace:
Soft sigh'd the flute; the tender voice was heard,
Warbling the varied heart; the woodlands round
Applied their choir; and winds and waters flow'd
In consonance. Such were those prime of days.
But now those white unblemish'd manners, whence
The fabling poets took their golden age,
Are found no more amid these iron times.
These dregs of life! now the distemper'd mind
Has lost that concord of harmonious powers,
Which forms the soul of happiness; and all
Is off the poise within: the passions all
Have burst their bounds; and reason half extinct,
Or impotent, or else approving, sees
The foul disorder. Senseless, and deform'd,
Convulsive anger storms at large; or pale,
And silent, settles into fell revenge.
Base envy withers at another's joy,
And hates that excellence it can not reach.
Desponding fear, of feeble fancies full,
Weak and unmanly, loosens every power.
E'en love itself is bitterness of soul,
A pensive anguish pining at the heart;
Or, sunk to sordid interest, feels no more
That noble wish, that never cloy'd desire,
Which, selfish joy disdaining, seeks alone
To bless the dearer object of its flame.
Hope sickens with extravagance; and grief,
Of life impatient, into madness swells;
Or in dead silence wastes the weeping hours.
These, and a thousand mixt emotions more,
From ever changing views of good and ill,
Form'd infinitely various, vex the mind
With endless storm: whence, deeply rankling, grows
The partial thought, a listless unconcern,
Cold, and averting from our neighbour's good;
Then dark disgust, and hatred, winding wiles,
Coward deceit, and ruffian violence:
At last, extinct each social feeling, fell
And joyless inhumanity pervades
And petrifies the heart. Nature disturb'd
Is deem'd vindictive, to have chang'd her course.
Hence, in old dusky time, a deluge came:
When the deep-cleft disparting orb, that arch'd
The central waters round, impetuous rush'd,
With universal burst, into the gulf,
And o'er the high piled hills of fractured earth
Wide dash'd the waves, in undulation vast;
Till, from the centre to the streaming clouds,
A shoreless ocean tumbled round the globe.
The Seasons since have, with severer sway,
Oppress'd a broken world: the Winter keen
Shook forth his waste of snows: and Summer shot
His pestilential heats. Great Spring, before,
Green'd all the year; and fruits and blossoms blush'd,
In social sweetness, on the selfsame bough.
Pure was the temperate air; an even calm
Perpetual reign'd, save what the zephyrs bland
Breathed o'er the blue expanse: for then nor storms
Were taught to blow, nor hurricanes to rage;
Sound slept the waters; no sulphureous glooms
Swell'd in the sky, and sent the lightning forth;
While sickly damps and cold autumnal fogs
Hung not, relaxing, on the springs of life.
But now, of turbid elements the sport,
From clear to cloudy tost, from hot to cold,
And dry to moist, with inward-eating change,
Our drooping days are dwindled down to nought,
Their period finish'd ere 'tis well begun.
And yet the wholesome herb neglected dies;
Though with the pure exhilarating soul
Of nutriment and health, and vital powers,
Beyond the search of art, 'tis copious blest.
For, with hot ravin fired, ensanguined man
Is now become the lion of the plain,
And worse. The wolf, who from the nightly fold
Fierce drags the bleating prey, ne'er drunk her milk,
Nor wore her warming fleece: nor has the steer

At whose strong chest the deadly tiger hangs,
E'er plough'd for him. They too are temper'd high,
With hunger stung and wild necessity;
Nor lodges pity in their shaggy breast.
But man, whom Nature form'd of milder clay,
With every kind emotion in his heart,
And taught alone to weep; while from her lap
She pours ten thousand delicacies, herbs,
And fruits, as numerous as the drops of rain
Or beams that gave them birth: shall he, fair form!
Who wears sweet smiles, and looks erect on Heaven,
E'er stoop to mingle with the prowling herd,
And dip his tongue in gore? The beast of prey,
Blood-stain'd, deserves to bleed: but you, ye flocks,
What have you done; ye peaceful people, what,
To merit death? you, who have given us milk
In luscious streams, and lent us your own coat
Against the Winter's cold? and the plain ox,
That harmless, honest, guileless animal,
In what has he offended? he, whose toil,
Patient and ever ready, clothes the land
With all the pomp of harvest; shall he bleed,
And struggling groan beneath the cruel hands
E'en of the clown he feeds? and that, perhaps,
To swell the riot of the autumnal feast,
Won by his labour? Thus the feeling heart
Would tenderly suggest: but 'tis enough,
In this late age, adventurous, to have touch'd
Light on the numbers of the Samian sage.
High Heaven forbids the bold presumptuous strain,
Whose wisest will has fixed us in a state
That must not yet to pure perfection rise.

Now when the first foul torrent of the brooks,
Swell'd with the vernal rains, is ebb'd away,
And, whitening, down their mossy-tinctured stream
Descend the billowy foam: now is the time,
While yet the dark-brown water aids the guile,
To tempt the trout. The well-dissembled fly,
The rod fine-tapering with elastic spring,
Snatch'd from the hoary steed the floating line,
And all thy slender watry stores prepare.
But let not on thy hook the tortured worm,
Convulsive, twist in agonizing folds;
Which, by rapacious hunger swallow'd deep,
Gives, as you tear it from the bleeding breast
Of the weak helpless uncomplaining wretch,
Harsh pain and horror to the tender hand.

When with his lively ray the potent sun
Has pierced the streams, and roused the finny-race,
Then, issuing cheerful, to thy sport repair;
Chief should the western breezes curling play,
And heave o'er ether bear the shadowy clouds,
High to their fount, this day, amid the hills,
And woodlands warbling round, trace up the brooks;
The next, pursue their rocky-channel'd maze,
Down to the river, in whose ample wave
Their little naiads love to sport at large.
Just in the dubious point, where with the pool
Is mix'd the trembling stream, or where it boils
Around the stone, or from the hollow'd bank
Reverted plays in undulating flow,
There throw, nice-judging, the delusive fly;
And as you lead it round in artful curve,
With eye attentive mark the springing game.
Straight as above the surface of the flood
They wanton rise, or urged by hunger leap,
Then fix, with gentle twitch, the barbed hook:
Some lightly tossing to the grassy bank,
And to the shelving shore slow dragging some,
With various hand proportion'd to their force.
If yet too young, and easily deceived,
A worthless prey scarce bends your pliant rod
Him, piteous of his youth and the short space
He has enjoy'd the vital light of Heaven,
Soft disengage, and back into the stream
The speckled captive throw. But should you lure
From his dark haunt, beneath the tangled roots
Of pendant trees, the monarch of the brook,
Behoves you then to ply your finest art.
Long time he, following cautious, scans the fly;
And oft attempts to seize it, but as oft
The dimpled water speaks his jealous fear.
At last, while haply o'er the shaded sun
Passes a cloud, he desperate takes the death,
With sullen plunge. At once he darts along,
Deep-struck, and runs out all the lengthened line;
Then seeks the farthest ooze, the sheltering weed,
The cavern'd bank, his old secure abode;
And flies aloft, and flounces round the pool,
Indignant of the guile. With yielding hand,
That feels him still, yet to his furious course
Gives way, you, now retiring, following now
Across the stream, exhaust his idle rage:
Till floating broad upon his breathless side,
And to his fate abandon'd, to the shore
You gaily drag your unresisting prize.

Thus pass the temperate hours; but when the sun
Shakes from his noon-day throne the scattering clouds,
Even shooting listless langour through the deeps;
Then seek the bank where flowering elders crowd,
Where scatter'd wild the lily of the vale
Its balmy essence breathes, where cowslips hang
The dewy head, where purple violets lurk,
With all the lowly children of the shade:
Or lie reclined beneath yon spreading ash,
Hung o'er the steep; whence, borne on liquid wing,
The sounding culver shoot; or where the hawk,
High, in the beetling cliff, his eyry builds.
There let the classic page thy fancy lead
Through rural scenes; such as the Mantuan swain
Paints in the matchless harmony of song.
Or catch thyself the landscape, gliding swift

Athwart imagination's vivid eye:
Or by the vocal woods and waters lull'd,
And lost in lonely musing, in the dream,
Confused, of careless solitude, where mix
Ten thousand wandering images of things,
Soothe every gust of passion into peace;
All but the swellings of the soften'd heart,
That waken, not disturb, the tranquil mind.
Behold yon breathing prospect bids the Muse
Throw all her beauty forth. But who can paint
Like Nature? Can imagination boast,
Amid its gay creation, hues like hers?
Or can it mix them with that matchless skill,
And lose them in each other, as appears
In every bud that blows? If fancy then
Unequal fails beneath the pleasing task,
Ah, what shall language do? Ah, where find words
Tinged with so many colours; and whose power,
To life approaching, may perfume my lays
With that fine oil, those aromatic gales,
That inexhaustive flow continual round?
Yet, though successless, will the toil delight.
Come then, ye virgins and ye youths, whose hearts
Have felt the raptures of refining love;
And thou, Amanda, come, pride of my song!
Form'd by the Graces, loveliness itself!
Come with those downcast eyes, sedate and sweet,
Those looks demure, that deeply pierce the soul,
Where, with the light of thoughtful reason mix'd,
Shines lively fancy and the feeling heart:
Oh come! and while the rosy-footed May
Steals blushing on, together let us tread
The morning dews, and gather in their prime
Fresh-blooming flowers, to grace thy braided hair,
And thy loved bosom that improves their sweets.
See, where the winding vale its lavish stores,
Irriguous, spreads. See, how the lily drinks
The latent rill, scarce oozing through the grass,
Of growth luxuriant; or the humid bank,
In fair profusion, decks. Long let us walk,
Where the breeze blows from yon extended field
Of blossom'd beans. Arabia can not boast
A fuller gale of joy, than, liberal, thence
Breathes through the sense, and takes the ravished soul.
Nor is the mead unworthy of thy foot,
Full of fresh verdure, and unnumber'd flowers,
The negligence of Nature, wide, and wild;
Where, undisguised by mimic Art, she spreads
Unbounded beauty to the roving eye.
Here their delicious task the fervent bees,
In swarming millions, tend: around, athwart,
Through the soft air, the busy nations fly,
Cling to the bud, and, with inserted tube,
Suck its pure essence, its ethereal soul;
And oft, with bolder wing, they soaring dare
The purple heath, or where the wild thyme grows,
And yellow load them with the luscious spoil.
At length the finish'd garden to the view
Its vistas opens, and its alleys green.
Snatch'd through the verdant maze, the hurried eye
Distracted wanders; now the bowery walk
Of covert close, where scarce a speck of day
Falls on the lengthen'd gloom, protracted sweeps:
Now meets the bending sky; the river now
Dimpling along, the breezy ruffled lake,
The forest darkening round, the glittering spire,
The ethereal mountain, and the distant main.
But why so far excursive? when at hand,
Along these blushing borders, bright with dew,
And in yon mingled wilderness of flowers,
Fair-handed spring unbosoms every grace;
Throws out the snowdrop and the crocus first;
The daisy, primrose, violet darkly blue,
And polyanthus of unnumber'd dyes;
The yellow wall-flower, stain'd with iron brown;
And lavish stock that scents the garden round:
From the soft wing of vernal breezes shed,
Anemones; auriculas, enriched
With shining meal o'er all their velvet leaves;
And full ranunculas, of glowing red.
Then comes the tulip-race, where Beauty plays
Her idle freaks; from family diffused
To family, as flies the father-dust,
The varied colours run; and, while they break
On the charm'd eye, the exulting florist marks,
With secret pride, the wonders of his hand.
No gradual bloom is wanting; from the bud,
Firstborn of Spring, to Summer's musky tribes:
Nor hyacinths, of purest virgin white,
Low-bent, and blushing inward; nor jonquils,
Of potent fragrance; nor Narcissus fair,
As o'er the fabled fountain hanging still;
Nor broad carnations, nor gay-spotted pinks;
Nor, shower'd from every bush, the damask-rose.
Infinite numbers, delicacies, smells,
With hues on hues expression can not paint,
The breath of Nature, and her endless bloom.
Hail, Source of Being! Universal Soul
Of Heaven and earth! Essential Presence, hail!
To Thee I bend the knee; to Thee my thoughts,
Continual, climb; who, with a master-hand,
Hast the great whole into perfection touched.
By Thee the various vegetative tribes,
Wrapt in a filmy net, and clad with leaves,
Draw the live ether, and imbibe the dew:
By Thee disposed into congenial soils,
Stands each attractive plant, and sucks, and swells
The juicy tide; a twining mass of tubes.
At Thy command the vernal sun awakes
The torpid sap, detruded to the root
By wintry winds; that now in fluent dance,
And lively fermentation, mounting, spreads
All this innumerous-colour'd scene of things
As rising from the vegetable world
My theme ascends, with equal wing ascend

My panting Muse; and hark, how loud the woods
Invite you forth in all your gayest trim.
Lend me your song, ye nightingales! oh, pour
The mazy-running soul of melody
Into my varied verse! while I deduce,
From the first note the hollow cuckoo sings,
The symphony of Spring, and touch a theme
Unknown to fame,—the passion of the groves.

When first the soul of love is sent abroad,
Warm through the vital air, and on the heart
Harmonious seizes, the gay troops begin,
In gallant thought, to plume the painted wing;
And try again the long-forgotten strain,
At first faint-warbled. But no sooner grows
The soft infusion prevalent, and wide,
Than, all alive, at once their joy o'erflows
In music unconfined. Up-springs the lark,
Shrill-voiced, and loud, the messenger of morn;
Ere yet the shadows fly, he mounted sings
Amid the dawning clouds, and from their haunts
Calls up the tuneful nations. Every copse
Deep-tangled, tree irregular, and bush
Bending with dewy moisture, o'er the heads
Of the coy quiristers that lodge within,
Are prodigal of harmony. The thrush
And wood-lark, o'er the kind-contending throng
Superior heard, run through the sweetest length
Of notes; when listening Philomela deigns
To let them joy, and purposes, in thought
Elate, to make her night excel their day.
The black-bird whistles from the thorny brake;
The mellow bullfinch answers from the grove:
Nor are the linnets, o'er the flowering furze
Pour'd out profusely, silent. Join'd to these
Innumerous songsters, in the freshening shade
Of new-sprung leaves, their modulations mix
Mellifluous. The jay, the rook, the daw,
And each harsh pipe, discordant heard alone,
Aid the full concert: while the stock-dove breathes
A melancholy murmur through the whole.

'Tis love creates their melody, and all
This waste of music is the voice of love;
That even to birds, and beasts, the tender arts
Of pleasing teaches. Hence the glossy kind
Try every winning way inventive love
Can dictate, and in courtship to their mates
Pour forth their little souls. First, wide around,
With distant awe, in airy rings they rove,
Endeavouring by a thousand tricks to catch
The cunning, conscious, half-averted glance
Of the regardless charmer. Should she seem
Softening the least approvance to bestow,
Their colours burnish, and by hope inspired,
They brisk advance; then, on a sudden struck,
Retire disorder'd; then again approach;
In fond rotation spread the spotted wing,
And shiver every feather with desire.

Connubial leagues agreed, to the deep woods
They haste away, all as their fancy leads,
Pleasure, or food, or secret safety prompts;
That Nature's great command may be obey'd:
Nor all the sweet sensations they perceive
Indulged in vain. Some to the holly-hedge
Nestling repair, and to the thicket some;
Some to the rude protection of the thorn
Commit their feeble offspring. The cleft tree
Offers its kind concealment to a few,
Their food its insects, and its moss their nests.
Others apart far in the grassy dale,
Or roughening waste, their humble texture weave.
But most in woodland solitudes delight,
In unfrequented glooms, or shaggy banks,
Steep, and divided by a babbling brook,
Whose murmurs sooth them all the live-long day,
When by kind duty fix'd. Among the roots
Of hazel, pendent o'er the plaintive stream,
They frame the first foundation of their domes;
Dry sprigs of trees, in artful fabric laid,
And bound with clay together. Now 'tis nought
But restless hurry through the busy air,
Beat by unnumber'd wings. The swallow sweeps
The slimy pool, to build his hanging house
Intent. And often, from the careless back
Of herds and flocks, a thousand tugging bills
Pluck hair and wool; and oft, when unobserved,
Steal from the barn a straw: till soft and warm,
Clean and complete, their habitation grows.

As thus the patient dam assiduous sits,
Not to be tempted from her tender task,
Or by sharp hunger, or by smooth delight,
Though the whole loosen'd Spring around her blows,
Her sympathizing lover takes his stand
High on the opponent bank, and ceaseless sings
The tedious time away; or else supplies
Her place a moment, while she sudden flits
To pick the scanty meal. The appointed time
With pious toil fulfill'd, the callow young,
Warm'd and expanded into perfect life,
Their brittle bondage break, and come to light,
A helpless family, demanding food
With constant clamor: O what passions then,
What melting sentiments of kindly care,
On the new parents seize! Away they fly
Affectionate and undesiring, bear
The most delicious morsel to their young;
Which equally distributed, again
The search begins. Even so a gentle pair
By fortune sunk, but form'd of generous mould,
And charm'd with cares beyond the vulgar breast,
In some lone cot amid the distant woods,
Sustain'd alone by providential Heaven,
Oft, as they weeping eye their infant train,
Check their own appetites, and give them all.

Nor toil alone they scorn: exalting love,
By the great Father of the Spring inspired,
Gives instant courage to the fearful race
And to the simple art. With stealthy wing,

Should some rude foot their woody haunts molest,
Amid a neighbouring bush they silent drop,
And whirring thence as if alarm'd, deceive
The unfeeling schoolboy. Hence, around the head
Of wandering swain, the white-wing'd plover wheels
Her sounding flight, and then directly on
In long excursion skims the level lawn,
To tempt him from her nest. The wild-duck, hence,
O'er the rough moss, and o'er the trackless waste
The heath-hen flutters, pious fraud! to lead
The hot pursuing spaniel far astray.

Be not the muse ashamed, here to bemoan
Her brothers of the grove, by tyrant Man
Inhuman caught, and in the narrow cage
From liberty confined, and boundless air.
Dull are the pretty slaves, their plumage dull,
Ragged, and all its brightening lustre lost;
Nor is that sprightly wildness in their notes,
Which, clear and vigorous, warbles from the beach.
O then ye friends of love and love-taught song,
Spare the soft tribes, this barbarous art forbear;
If on your bosom innocence can win,
Music engage, or piety persuade.

But let not chief the nightingale lament
Her ruin'd care too delicately framed
To brook the harsh confinement of the cage.
Oft when, returning with her loaded bill,
The astonish'd mother finds a vacant nest,
By the hard hand of unrelenting clowns
Robbed, to the ground the vain provision falls;
Her pinions ruffle, and low-drooping scarce
Can bear the mourner to the poplar shade;
Where, all abandoned to despair, she sings
Her sorrows through the night; and, on the bough,
Sole-sitting, still at every dying fall
Takes up again her lamentable strain
Of winding wo; till, wide around, the woods
Sigh to her song, and with her wail resound.

But now the feather'd youth their former bounds,
Ardent, disdain; and, weighing oft their wings,
Demand the free possession of the sky:
This one glad office more, and then dissolves
Parental love at once, now needless grown.
Unlavish wisdom never works in vain.
'Tis on some evening, sunny, grateful, mild,
When nought but balm is breathing through the woods,
With yellow lustre bright, that the new tribes
Visit the spacious heavens, and look abroad
On Nature's common, far as they can see,
Or wing, their range and pasture. O'er the boughs
Dancing about, still at the giddy verge
Their resolution fails; their pinions still,
In loose libration stretched, to trust the void
Trembling refuse: till down before them fly
The parent guides, and chide, exhort, command,
Or push them off. The surging air receives
Its plumy burden; and their self-taught wings
Winnow the waving element. On ground
Alighted, bolder up again they lead,
Farther and farther on, the lengthening flight;
Till vanish'd every fear, and every power
Roused into life and action, light in air
The acquitted parents see their soaring race,
And once rejoicing never know them more.

High from the summit of a craggy cliff,
Hung o'er the deep, such as amazing frowns
On utmost Kilda's* shore, whose lonely race
Resign the setting sun to Indian worlds,
The royal eagle draws his vigorous young,
Strong-pounced, and ardent with paternal fire.
Now fit to raise a kingdom of their own,
He drives them from his fort, the towering seat,
For ages, of his empire; which, in peace,
Unstained he holds, while many a league to sea
He wings his course, and preys in distant isles.

Should I my steps turn to the rural seat,
Whose lofty elms, and venerable oaks,
Invite the rook, who high amid the boughs
In early Spring, his airy city builds,
And ceaseless caws amusive; there, well pleased,
I might the various polity survey
Of the mix'd household kind. The careful hen
Calls all her chirping family around,
Fed and defended by the fearless cock;
Whose breast with ardour flames, as on he walks,
Graceful, and crows defiance. In the pond,
The finely checker'd duck, before her train,
Rows garrulous. The stately-sailing swan
Gives out his snowy plumage to the gale;
And, arching proud his neck, with oary feet
Bears forward fierce, and guards his osier-isle,
Protective of his young. The turkey nigh,
Loud-threatening, reddens; while the peacock spreads
His every-colour'd glory to the sun,
And swims in radiant majesty along.
O'er the whole homely scene, the cooing dove
Flies thick in amorous chase, and wanton rolls
The glancing eye, and turns the changeful neck.

While thus the gentle tenants of the shade
Indulge their purer loves, the rougher world
Of brutes, below, rush furious into flame,
And fierce desire. Through all his lusty veins
The bull, deep-scorch'd, the raging passion feels.
Of pasture sick, and negligent of food,
Scarce seen, he wades among the yellow broom,
While o'er his ample sides the rambling spray
Luxuriant shoot; or through the mazy wood
Dejected wanders, nor the inticing bud
Crops, though it presses on his careless sense.
And oft, in jealous maddening fancy wrapt,
He seeks the fight; and, idly-butting, feigns
His rival gored in every knotty trunk.
Him should he meet, the bellowing war begins
Their eyes flash fury; to the hollow'd earth,

* The farthest of the western islands of Scotland.

Whence the sand flies, they mutter bloody deeds,
And groaning deep, the impetuous battle mix:
While the fair heifer, balmy-breathing, near,
Stands kindling up their rage. The trembling steed,
With this hot impulse seized in every nerve,
Nor heeds the rein, nor hears the sounding thong;
Blows are not felt; but tossing high his head,
And by the well-known joy to distant plains
Attracted strong, all wild he bursts away;
O'er rocks, and woods, and craggy mountains flies;
And, neighing, on the aerial summit takes
The exciting gale; then, steep-descending, cleaves
The headlong torrents foaming down the hills,
E'en where the madness of the straiten'd stream
Turns in black eddies round: such is the force
With which his frantic heart and sinews swell.
Nor undelighted by the boundless Spring
Are the broad monsters of the foaming deep:
From the deep ooze and gelid cavern roused,
They flounce and tumble in unwieldy joy.
Dire were the strain, and dissonant to sing
The cruel raptures of the savage kind:
How by this flame their native wrath sublimed,
They roam, amid the fury of their heart,
The far-resounding waste in fiercer bands,
And growl their horrid loves. But this the theme
I sing, enraptured, to the British Fair,
Forbids, and leads me to the mountain-brow,
Where sits the shepherd on the grassy turf,
Inhaling, healthful, the descending sun.
Around him feeds his many-bleating flock,
Of various cadence; and his sportive lambs,
This way and that convolved, in friskful glee,
Their frolics play. And now the sprightly race
Invites them forth; when swift, the signal given,
They start away, and sweep the massy mound
That runs around the hill; the rampart once
Of iron war, in ancient barbarous times,
When disunited Britain ever bled,
Lost in eternal broil: ere yet she grew
To this deep-laid indissoluble state,
Where Wealth and Commerce lift their golden heads;
And o'er our labours, Liberty and Law,
Impartial, watch; the wonder of a world!
What is this mighty breath, ye sages, say,
That, in a powerful language, felt, not heard,
Instructs the fowls of Heaven; and through their breast
These arts of love diffuses? What, but God?
Inspiring God! who boundless Spirit all,
And unremitting Energy, pervades,
Adjusts, sustains, and agitates the whole.
He ceaseless works alone; and yet alone
Seems not to work: with such perfection framed
In this complex stupendous scheme of things.
But, though conceal'd, to every purer eye
The informing Author in his works appears:
Chief, lovely Spring, in thee, and thy soft scenes,
The Smiling God is seen; while water, earth,
And air attest his bounty; which exalts
The brute creation to this finer thought,
And annual melts their undesigning hearts
Profusely thus in tenderness and joy.
Still let my song a nobler note assume,
And sing the infusive force of Spring on man;
When heaven and earth, as if contending, vie
To raise his being, and serene his soul.
Can he forbear to join the general smile
Of nature? Can fierce passions vex his breast,
While every gale is peace, and every grove
Is melody? hence! from the bounteous walks
Of flowing Spring, ye sordid sons of earth,
Hard, and unfeeling of another's woe;
Or only lavish to yourselves; away!
But come, ye generous minds, in whose wide thought,
Of all his works, creative Bounty burns
With warmest beam; and on your open front
And liberal eye, sits, from his dark retreat
Inviting modest Want. Nor, till invoked,
Can restless goodness wait: your active search
Leaves no cold wintry corner unexplored
Like silent-working Heaven, surprising oft
The lonely heart with unexpected good.
For you the roving spirit of the wind
Blows Spring abroad; for you the teeming clouds
Descend in gladsome plenty o'er the world;
And the sun sheds his kindest rays for you,
Ye flower of human race! in these green days,
Reviving Sickness lifts her languid head;
Life flows afresh; and young-eyed Health exalts
The whole creation round. Contentment walks
The sunny glade, and feels an inward bliss
Spring o'er his mind, beyond the power of kings
To purchase. Pure serenity apace
Induces thought, and contemplation still.
By swift degrees the love of Nature works,
And warms the bosom; till at last sublimed
To rapture, and enthusiastic heat,
We feel the present Deity, and taste
The joy of GOD to see a happy world!
These are the sacred feelings of thy heart,
Thy heart inform'd by reason's purer ray,
O Lyttelton, the friend! thy passions thus
And meditations vary, as at large,
Courting the Muse, through Hagley Park thou stray'st;
The British Tempé! there along the dale,
With woods o'erhung, and shagg'd with mossy rocks,
Whence on each hand the gushing waters play,
And down the rough cascade white-dashing fall,
Or gleam in lengthened vista through the trees,
You silent steal; or sit beneath the shade
Of solemn oaks, that tuft the swelling mounts
Thrown graceful round by Nature's careless hand,

And pensive listen to the various voice
Of rural peace: the herds, the flocks, the birds,
The hollow-whispering breeze, the plaint of rills,
That, purling down amid the twisted roots
Which creep around, their dewy murmurs shake
On the soothed ear. From these abstracted oft,
You wander through the philosophic world;
Where in bright train continual wonders rise,
Or to the curious or the pious eye.
And oft, conducted by historic truth,
You tread the long extent of backward time:
Planning, with warm benevolence of mind,
And honest zeal unwarp'd by party rage,
Britannia's weal; how from the venal gulf
To raise her virtue, and her arts revive.
Or, turning thence thy view, these graver thoughts
The Muses charm: while, with sure taste refined,
You draw the inspiring breath of ancient song;
Till nobly rises, emulous, thy own.
Perhaps thy loved Lucinda shares thy walk,
With soul to thine attuned. Then Nature all
Wears to the lover's eye a look of love;
And all the tumult of a guilty world,
Tost by ungenerous passions, sinks away.
The tender heart is animated peace;
And as it pours its copious treasures forth,
In varied converse, softening every theme,
You, frequent-pausing, turn, and from her eyes,
Where meeken'd sense, and amiable grace,
And lively sweetness dwell, enraptured, drink
That nameless spirit of ethereal joy,
Unutterable happiness! which love,
Alone, bestows, and on a favour'd few.
Meantime you gain the height, from whose fair brow
The bursting prospect spreads immense around:
And snatch'd o'er hill and dale, and wood and lawn,
And verdant field, and darkening heath between,
And villages embosom'd soft in trees,
And spiry towns by surging columns mark'd
Of household smoke, your eye excursive roams:
Wide-stretching from the hall, in whose kind haunt
The Hospitable Genius lingers still,
To where the broken landscape, by degrees,
Ascending, roughens into rigid hills;
O'er which the Cambrian mountains, like far clouds
That skirt the blue horizon, dusky rise.

Flush'd by the spirit of the genial year,
Now from the virgin's cheek a fresher bloom
Shoots, less and less, the live carnation round;
Her lips blush deeper sweets; she breathes of youth;
The shining moisture swells into her eyes,
In brighter flow; her wishing bosom heaves,
With palpitations wild; kind tumults seize
Her veins, and all yer yielding soul is love.
From the keen gaze her lover turns away
Full of the dear ecstatic power, and sick
With sighing languishment. Ah then, ye fair!
Be greatly cautious of your sliding hearts:
Dare not the infectious sigh; the pleading look,
Down-cast and low, in meek submission dress'd,
But full of guile. Let not the fervent tongue,
Prompt to deceive, with adulation smooth,
Gain on your purposed will. Nor in the bower,
Where woodbines flaunt, and roses shed a couch,
While Evening draws her crimson curtains round
Trust your soft minutes with betraying Man.

And let the aspiring youth beware of love,
Of the smooth glance beware; for 'tis too late,
When on his heart the torrent-softness pours;
Then wisdom prostrate lies, and fading fame
Dissolves in air away; while the fond soul,
Wrapp'd in gay visions of unreal bliss,
Still paints the illusive form; the kindling grace;
The enticing smile; the modest-seeming eye,
Beneath whose beautcous beams, belying Heaven,
Lurk searchless cunning, cruelty, and death:
And still false-warbling in his cheated ear,
Her siren voice, enchanting, draws him on
To guileful shores, and meads of fatal joy.

E'en present, in the very lap of love
Inglorious laid; while music flows around,
Perfumes, and oils, and wine, and wanton hours;
Amid the roses fierce Repentance rears
Her snaky crest: a quick returning pang
Shoots through the conscious heart; where honour still,
And great design, against the oppressive load
Of luxury, by fits, impatient heave.

But absent, what fantastic woes, aroused,
Rage in each thought, by restless musing fed,
Chill the warm cheek, and blast the bloom of life?
Neglected fortune flies; and sliding swift,
Prone into ruin fall his scorn'd affairs.
'Tis nought but gloom around: the darken'd sun
Loses his light. The rosy-bosom'd Spring
To weeping fancy pines; and yon bright arch,
Contracted, bends into a dusky vault.
All Nature fades extinct: and she alone,
Heard, felt, and seen, possesses every thought,
Fills every sense, and pants in every vein.
Books are but formal dulness, tedious friends;
And sad amid the social band he sits,
Lonely, and unattentive. From his tongue
The unfinish'd period falls: while borne away
On swelling thought, his wafted spirit flies
To the vain bosom of his distant fair;
And leaves the semblance of a lover, fix'd
In melancholy site, with head declined,
And love-dejected eyes. Sudden he starts,
Shook from his tender trance, and restless runs
To glimmering shades, and sympathetic glooms;
Where the dun umbrage o'er the falling stream,
Romantic, hangs; there through the pensive dusk
Strays, in heart-thrilling meditation lost,
Indulging all to love: or on the bank
Thrown, amid drooping lilies, swells the breeze
With sighs unceasing, and the brook with tears.

Thus in soft anguish he consumes the day,
Nor quits his deep retirement, till the Moon
Peeps through the chambers of the fleecy east,
Enlightened by degrees, and in her train
Leads on the gentle Hours; then forth he walks,
Beneath the trembling languish of her beam,
With soften'd soul, and woos the bird of eve
To mingle woes with his: or, while the world
And all the sons of Care lie hush'd in sleep,
Associates with the midnight shadows drear;
And, sighing to the lonely taper, pours
His idly-tortured heart into the page,
Meant for the moving messenger of love;
Where rapture burns on rapture, every line
With rising frenzy fired. But if on bed
Delirious flung, sleep from his pillow flies.
All night he tosses, nor the balmy power
In any posture finds; till the gray Morn
Lifts her pale lustre on the paler wretch,
Exanimate by love: and then perhaps
Exhausted Nature sinks a while to rest,
Still interrupted by distracted dreams,
That o'er the sick imagination rise,
And in black colours paint the mimic scene.

Oft with the enchantress of his soul he talks;
Sometimes in crowds distress'd; or if retired
To secret winding flower-enwoven bowers,
Far from the dull impertinence of Man,
Just as he, credulous, his endless cares
Begins to lose in blind oblivious love,
Snatch'd from her yielded hand, he knows not how,
Through forests huge, and long untravel'd heaths
With desolation brown, he wanders waste,
In night and tempest wrapp'd: or shrinks aghast,
Back, from the bending precipice; or wades
The turbid stream below, and strives to reach
The farther shore; where succourless, and sad,
She with extended arms his aid implores;
But strives in vain; borne by the outrageous flood
To distance down, he rides the ridgy wave,
Or whelm'd beneath the boiling eddy sinks.

These are the charming agonies of love,
Whose misery delights. But through the heart
Should jealousy its venom once diffuse,
'Tis then delightful misery no more,
But agony unmix'd incessant gall,
Corroding every thought, and blasting all
Love's paradise. Ye fairy prospects, then,
Ye beds of roses, and ye bowers of joy,
Farewell! ye gleamings of departed peace,
Shine out your last! the yellow-tinging plague
Internal vision taints, and in a night
Of livid gloom imagination wraps.
Ah then! instead of love-enliven'd cheeks,
Of sunny features, and of ardent eyes
With flowing rapture bright, dark looks succeed,
Suffused and glaring with untender fire;
A clouded aspect, and a burning cheek,
Where the whole poison'd soul, malignant, sits,
And frightens love away. Ten thousand fears
Invented wild, ten thousand frantic views
Of horrid rivals, hanging on the charms
For which he melts his fondness, eat him up
With fervent anguish, and consuming rage.
In vain reproaches lend their idle aid,
Deceitful pride, and resolution frail,
Giving false peace a moment. Fancy pours,
Afresh, her beauties on his busy thought,
Her first endearments twining round the soul,
With all the witchcraft of ensnaring love.
Straight the fierce storm involves his mind anew,
Flames through the nerves, and boils along the veins;
While anxious doubt distracts the tortured heart:
For e'en the sad assurance of his fears
Were ease to what he feels. Thus the warm youth,
Whom love deludes into his thorny wilds,
Through flowery tempting paths, or leads a life
Of fever'd rapture or of cruel care;
His brightest aims extinguish'd all, and all
His lively moments running down to waste.

But happy they! the happiest of their kind!
Whom gentler stars unite, and in one fate
Their hearts, their fortunes, and their beings blend.
'Tis not the coarser tie of human laws,
Unnatural oft and foreign to the mind,
That binds their peace, but harmony itself,
Attuning all their passions into love;
Where friendship full-exerts her softest power,
Perfect esteem enliven'd by desire
Ineffable, and sympathy of soul;
Thought meeting thought, and will preventing will,
With boundless confidence: for nought but love
Can answer love, and render bliss secure.
Let him, ungenerous, who, alone intent
To bless himself, from sordid parents buys
The loathing virgin, in eternal care,
Well-merited, consume his nights and days:
Let barbarous nations, whose inhuman love
Is wild desire, fierce as the suns they feel;
Let eastern tyrants, from the light of Heaven,
Seclude their bosom-slaves, meanly possess'd
Of a mere lifeless, violated form:
While those whom love cements in holy faith,
And equal transport, free as Nature live,
Disdaining fear. What is the world to them,
Its pomp, its pleasure, and its nonsense all?
Who in each other clasp whatever fair
High fancy forms, and lavish hearts can wish;
Something than beauty dearer, should they look
Or on the mind, or mind-illumin'd face;
Truth, goodness, honour, harmony, and love,
The richest bounty of indulgent Heaven.
Meantime a smiling offspring rises round,
And mingles both their graces. By degrees,
The human blossom blows: and every day,

Soft as it rolls along, shows some new charm,
The father's lustre, and the mother's bloom.
Then infant reason grows apace, and calls
For the kind hand of an assiduous care.
Delightful task! to rear the tender thought,
To teach the young idea how to shoot,
To pour the fresh instruction o'er the mind,
To breathe the enlivening spirit, and to fix
The generous purpose in the glowing breast.
Oh, speak the joy! ye, whom the sudden tear
Surprises often, while you look around,
And nothing strikes your eye but sights of bliss,
All various Nature pressing on the heart:
An elegant sufficiency, content,
Retirement, rural quiet, friendship, books,
Ease and alternate labour, useful life,
Progressive virtue, and approving Heaven!
These are the matchless joys of virtuous love,
And thus their moments fly. The Seasons thus,
As ceaseless round a jarring world they roll,
Still find them happy; and consenting Spring
Sheds her own rosy garland on their heads:
Till evening comes at last, serene and mild;
When after the long vernal day of life,
Enamour'd more, as more remembrance swells
With many a proof of recollected love,
Together down they sink in social sleep;
Together freed, their gentle spirits fly
To scenes where love and bliss immortal reign

Summer.

Jam clarus occultum Andromedæ pater
Ostendit ignem: jam Procyon furit,
Et stella vesani Leonis,
Sole dies referente siccos.
Jam pastor umbras cum grege languido,
Rivumque fessus quærit, et horridi
Dumeta Sylvani: caretque
Ripa vagis taciturna ventis.—*Hor.*

ARGUMENT.

The subject proposed. Invocation. Address to Mr. Dodington. An introductory reflection on the motion of the Heavenly Bodies; whence the succession of the Seasons. As the face of Nature in this season is almost uniform, the progress of the poem is a description of a Summer's Day. The Dawn. Sunrising. Hymn to the Sun. Forenoon. Summer Insects described. Haymaking. Sheepshearing. Noonday. A Woodland Retreat. Group of Herds and Flocks. A solemn Grove: how it affects a contemplative mind. A Cataract, and rude scene. View of Summer in the torrid zone. Storm of thunder and lightning. A Tale. The storm over. A serene afternoon. Bathing. Hour of Walking. Transition to the prospect of a rich, well cultivated Country; which introduces a panegyric on Great Britain. Sunset. Evening. Night. Summer Meteors. A Comet. The whole concluding with the praise of Philosophy.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

MR. DODINGTON,

ONE OF THE LORDS OF HIS MAJESTY'S TREASURY, ETC.

Sir,

It is not my purpose, in this address, to run into the common tract of dedicators, and attempt a panegyric which would prove ungrateful to you, too arduous for me, and superfluous with regard to the world. To you it would prove ungrateful, since there is a certain generous delicacy in men of the most distinguished merit, disposing them to avoid those praises they so powerfully attract. And when I consider that a character in which the virtues, the graces, and the muses join their influence as much exceeds the expression of the most elegant and judicious pen, as the finished beauty does the representation of the pencil, I have the best reasons for declining such an arduous undertaking. As, indeed, it would be superfluous in itself, for what reader need be told of those great abilities in the management of public affairs, and those amiable accomplishments in private life, which you so eminently possess. The general voice is loud in the praise of so many virtues, though posterity alone will do them justice. But may you, Sir, live long to illustrate your own fame by your own actions, and by them be transmitted to future times as the British Mæcenas!

Your example has recommended poetry with the greatest grace to the admiration of those who are engaged in the highest and most active scenes of life: and this, though confessedly the least considerable of those exalted qualities that dignify your character, must be particularly pleasing to one whose only hope of being introduced to your regard is through the recommendation of an art in which you are a master. But I forget what I have been declaring above; and must, therefore, turn my eyes to the following sheets. I am not ignorant that, when offered to your perusal, they are put into the hands of one of the finest and, con-

sequently, the most indulgent judges of the age: but, as there is no mediocrity in poetry, so there should be no limits to its ambition. I venture directly on the trial of my fame. If what I here present you has any merit to gain your approbation, I am not afraid of its success; and if it fails of your notice, I give it up to its just fate. This advantage, at least, I secure to myself, an occasion of thus publicly declaring that I am, with the profoundest veneration,

Sir, your most devoted,
Humble servant,
JAMES THOMSON.

SUMMER.

FROM brightening fields of ether fair disclosed,
Child of the Sun, refulgent Summer comes,
In pride of youth, and felt through Nature's depth:
He comes attended by the sultry Hours,
And ever fanning breezes, on his way;
While, from his ardent look, the turning Spring
Averts her blushful face; and earth, and skies,
All-smiling, to his hot dominion leaves.
Hence, let me haste into the mid-wood shade,
Where scarce a sunbeam wanders through the gloom:
And on the dark green grass, beside the brink
Of haunted stream, that by the roots of oak
Rolls o'er the rocky channel, lie at large,
And sing the glories of the circling year.
Come, Inspiration! from thy hermit-seat,
By mortal seldom found: may Fancy dare,
From thy fix'd serious eye, and raptured glance
Shot on surrounding Heaven, to steal one look
Creative of the Poet, every power
Exalting to an ecstasy of soul.
And thou, my youthful Muse's early friend,
In whom the human graces all unite:
Pure light of mind, and tenderness of heart;
Genius, and wisdom; the gay social sense,
By decency chastised; goodness and wit,
In seldom-meeting harmony combined;
Unblemish'd honour, and an active zeal
For Britain's glory, liberty, and Man:
O Dodington! attend my rural song,
Stoop to my theme, inspirit every line,
And teach me to deserve thy just applause.
With what an awful world-revolving power
Were first the unwieldy planets launch'd along
The illimitable void! thus to remain,
Amid the flux of many thousand years,
That oft has swept the toiling race of men,
And all their labour'd monuments away,
Firm, unremitting, matchless, in their course;
To the kind-temper'd change of night and day,
And of the seasons ever stealing round,
Minutely faithful: such the All-perfect hand!
That poised, impels, and rules the steady whole.
When now no more the alternate Twins are fired,
And Cancer reddens with the solar blaze,
Short is the doubtful empire of the night;
And soon, observant of approaching day,
The meek-eyed morn appears, mother of dews,
At first faint-gleaming in the dappled east:
Till far o'er ether spreads the widening glow
And, from before the lustre of her face,
White break the clouds away. With quicken'd step,
Brown Night retires: young Day pours in apace,
And opens all the lawny prospect wide.
The dripping rock, the mountain's misty top
Swell on the sight, and brighten with the dawn.
Blue, through the dusk, the smoking currents shine;
And from the bladed field the fearful hare
Limps, awkward: while along the forest-glade
The wild deer trip, and often turning gaze
At early passenger. Music awakes
The native voice of undissembled joy;
And thick around the woodland hymns arise.
Roused by the cock, the soon-clad shepherd leaves
His mossy cottage, where with Peace he dwells;
And from the crowded fold, in order, drives
His flock, to taste the verdure of the morn.
Falsely luxurious! will not Man awake;
And, springing from the bed of sloth, enjoy
The cool, the fragrant, and the silent hour,
To meditation due and sacred song?
For is there ought in sleep can charm the wise?
To lie in dead oblivion, losing half
The fleeting moments of too short a life;
Total extinction of the enlightened soul!
Or else to feverish vanity alive,
Wilder'd, and tossing through distemper'd dreams?
Who would in such a gloomy state remain
Longer than Nature craves; when every Muse
And every blooming pleasure wait without,
To bless the wildly-devious morning walk?
But yonder comes the powerful King of Day,
Rejoicing in the east. The lessening cloud,
The kindling azure, and the mountain's brow
Illumed with fluid gold, his near approach
Betoken glad. Lo! now, apparent all,
Aslant the dew-bright earth, and colour'd air,
He looks in boundless majesty abroad;
And sheds the shining day, that burnish'd plays
On rocks, and hills, and towers, and wandering streams,
High gleaming from afar. Prime cheerer, Light!
Of all material beings first and best!
Efflux divine! Nature's resplendent robe!
Without whose vesting beauty all were wrapt
In unessential gloom; and thou, O Sun!
Soul of surrounding worlds! in whom best seen
Shines out thy Maker! may I sing of thee?

'Tis by thy secret, strong, attractive force,
As with a chain indissoluble bound,
Thy system rolls entire: from the far bourne
Of utmost Saturn, wheeling wide his round
Of thirty years, to Mercury, whose disk
Can scarce be caught by philosophic eye,
Lost in the near effulgence of thy blaze.
Informer of the planetary train!
Without whose quickening glance their cumbrous orbs
Were brute unlovely mass, inert and dead,
And not, as now, the green abodes of life!
How many forms of being wait on thee!
Inhaling spirit; from the unfetter'd mind,
By thee sublimed, down to the daily race,
The mixing myriads of thy setting beam.
The vegetable world is also thine,
Parent of Seasons? who the pomp precede
That waits thy throne, as through thy vast domain,
Annual, along the bright ecliptic road,
In world-rejoicing state, it moves sublime.
Meantime, the expecting nations, circled gay
With all the various tribes of foodful earth,
Implore thy bounty, or send grateful up
A common hymn: while, round thy beaming car,
High-seen, the Seasons lead, in sprightly dance
Harmonious knit, the rosy-fingered Hours,
The Zephyrs floating loose, the timely Rains,
Of bloom ethereal the light-footed Dews,
And softened into joy the surly Storms.
These, in successive turn, with lavish hand,
Shower every beauty, every fragrance shower,
Herbs, flowers, and fruits; and, kindling at thy touch,
From land to land is flush'd the vernal year.
Nor to the surface of enliven'd earth,
Graceful with hills and dales, and leafy woods,
Her liberal tresses, is thy force confined:
But, to the bowel'd cavern, darting deep,
The mineral kinds confess thy mighty power.
Effulgent, hence the veiny marble shines;
Hence Labour draws his tools; hence burnish'd War
Gleams on the day; the nobler works of Peace
Hence bless mankind, and generous Commerce binds
The round of nations in a golden chain.
The unfruitful rock itself, impregn'd by thee,
In dark retirement forms the lucid stone.
The lively diamond drinks thy purest rays,
Collected light, compact; that polish'd bright,
And all its native lustre let abroad,
Dares, as it sparkles on the fair one's breast,
With vain ambition emulate her eyes.
At thee the ruby lights its deepening glow,
And with a waving radiance inward flames.
From thee, the sapphire, solid ether, takes
Its hue cerulean; and, of evening tinct,
The purple-streaming amethyst is thine.
With thy own smile the yellow topaz burns.
Nor deeper verdure dyes the robe of Spring,
When first she gives it to the southern gale,
Than the green emerald shows. But, all combined,
Thick through the whitening opal play thy beams;
Or, flying several from its surface, form
A trembling variance of revolving hues,
As the site varies in the gazer's hand.
The very dead creation, from thy touch,
Assumes a mimic life. By thee refined,
In brighter mazes the relucent stream
Plays o'er the mead. The precipice abrupt,
Projecting horror on the blacken'd flood,
Softens at thy return. The desert joys,
Wildly, through all his melancholy bounds.
Rude ruins glitter; and the briny deep,
Seen from some pointed promontory's top,
Far to the blue horizon's utmost verge,
Restless, reflects a floating gleam. But this,
And all the much-transported Muse can sing,
Are to thy beauty, dignity, and use,
Unequal far; great delegated source
Of light, and life, and grace, and joy below!
How shall I then attempt to sing of HIM!
Who, Light Himself, in uncreated light
Invested deep, dwells awfully retired
From mortal eye, or angel's purer ken;
Whose single smile has, from the first of time,
Fill'd, overflowing, all those lamps of Heaven,
That beam for ever through the boundless sky:
But, should he hide his face, the astonish'd sun,
And all the extinguish'd stars, would loosening reel
Wide from their spheres, and Chaos come again
And yet was every faltering tongue of Man,
ALMIGHTY FATHER! silent in thy praise;
Thy works themselves would raise a general voice,
E'en in the depth of solitary woods
By human foot untrod; proclaim thy power
And to the choir celestial THEE resound,
The eternal cause, support, and end of all!
To me be Nature's volume broad display'd;
And to peruse its all instructing page,
Or, haply catching inspiration thence,
Some easy passage, raptured, to translate
My sole delight; as through the falling glooms
Pensive I stray, or with the rising dawn
On Fancy's eagle-wing excursive soar.
Now, flaming up the heavens, the potent sun
Melts into limpid air the high-raised clouds,
And morning fogs, that hover'd round the hills
In party-colour'd bands; till wide unveil'd
The face of Nature shines, from where earth seems,
Far-stretch'd around, to meet the bending sphere
Half in a blush of clustering roses lost,
Dew-dropping Coolness to the shade retires;
There, on the verdant turf, or flowery bed,
By gelid founts and careless rills to muse;

While tyrant Heat, dispreading through the sky,
With rapid sway, his burning influence darts
On man, and beast, and herb, and tepid stream.
Who can unpitying see the flowery race,
Shed by the morn, their new-flush'd bloom resign,
Before the parching beam? so fade the fair,
When fevers revel through their azure veins.
But one the lofty follower of the sun,
Sad when he sets, shuts up her yellow leaves,
Drooping all night; and, when he warm returns,
Points her enamour'd bosom to his ray.
Home, from his morning task, the swain retreats;
His flock before him stepping to the fold:
While the full-udder'd mother lows around
The cheerful cottage, then expecting food,
The food of innocence and health! the daw,
The rock, and magpie, to the gray-grown oaks
That the calm village in their verdant arms,
Sheltering, embrace, direct their lazy flight;
Where on the mingling boughs they sit embower'd,
All the hot noon, till cooler hours arise.
Faint, underneath, the household fowls convene;
And, in a corner of the buzzing shade,
The house-dog, with the vacant greyhound, lies,
Out-stretch'd, and sleepy. In his slumbers one
Attacks the nightly thief, and one exults
O'er hill and dale; till, waken'd by the wasp,
They starting snap. Nor shall the Muse disdain
To let the little noisy summer race
Live in her lay, and flutter through her song:
Not mean though simple; to the sun ally'd,
From him they draw their animating fire.
Waked by his warmer ray, the reptile young
Come wing'd abroad; by the light air upborne,
Lighter, and full of soul. From every chink
And secret corner, where they slept away
The wintry storms; or rising from their tombs,
To higher life; by myriads, forth at once,
Swarming they pour; of all the varied hues
Their beauty-beaming parent can disclose.
Ten thousand forms, ten thousand different tribes,
People the blaze. To sunny waters some
By fatal instinct fly; where on the pool
They, sportive, wheel: or, sailing down the stream,
Are snatch'd immediate by the quick-eyed trout,
Or darting salmon. Thro' the green-wood glade
Some love to stray; there lodged, amused, and fed,
In the fresh leaf. Luxurious, others make
The meads their choice, and visit every flower,
And every latent herb: for the sweet task,
To propagate their kinds, and where to wrap,
In what soft beds, their young yet undisclosed,
Employs their tender care. Some to the house,
The fold, and dairy, hungry bend their flight;
Sip round the pail, or taste the curdling cheese;
Oft, inadvertent, from the milky stream
They meet their fate; or, weltering in the bowl,
With powerless wings around them wrapt, expire.

But chief to heedless flies the window proves
A constant death; where, gloomily retired,
The villain spider lives, cunning, and fierce,
Mixture abhorr'd! amid a mangled heap
Of carcasses, in eager watch he sits,
O'erlooking all his waving snares around.
Near the dire cell the dreadless wanderer oft
Passes, as oft the ruffian shows his front;
The prey at last ensnared, he dreadful darts,
With rapid glide, along the leaning line;
And, fixing in the wretch his cruel fangs,
Strikes backward grimly pleased; the fluttering wing
And shriller sound declare extreme distress,
And ask the helping hospitable hand.

Resounds the living surface of the ground:
Nor undelightful is the ceaseless hum,
To him who muses through the woods at noon;
Or drowsy shepherd, as he lies reclined,
With half-shut eyes, beneath the floating shade
Of willows gray, close crowding o'er the brook.
Gradual, from these what numerous kinds descend,
Evading e'en the microscopic eye?
Full Nature swarms with life; one wondrous mass
Of animals, or atoms organized,
Waiting the vital breath, when parent Heaven
Shall bid his spirit blow. The hoary fen,
In putrid streams, emits the living cloud
Of pestilence. Through subterranean cells,
Where searching sunbeams scarce can find a way,
Earth animated heaves. The flowery leaf
Wants not its soft inhabitants. Secure,
Within its winding citadel, the stone
Holds multitudes. But chief the forest boughs,
That dance unnumber'd to the playful breeze,
The downy orchard, and the melting pulp
Of mellow fruit, the nameless nations feed
Of evanescent insects. Where the pool
Stands mantled o'er with green, invisible,
Amid the floating verdure millions stray.
Each liquid too, whether it pierces, sooths,
Inflames, refreshes, or exalts the taste,
With various forms abounds. Nor is the stream
Of purest crystal, nor the lucid air,
Though one transparent vacancy it seems,
Void of their unseen people. These, conceal'd
By the kind art of forming Heaven, escape
The grosser eye of man: for, if the worlds
In worlds inclosed should on his senses burst,
From cates ambrosial, and the nectar'd bowl,
He would abhorrent turn; and in dead night,
When silence sleeps o'er all, be stunn'd with noise.

Let no presuming impious railer tax
Creative Wisdom, as if ought was form'd
In vain, or not for admirable ends.
Shall little haughty Ignorance pronounce
His works unwise, of which the smallest part

Exceeds the narrow vision of her mind?
As if upon a full proportion'd dome,
On swelling columns heaved, the pride of art!
A critic fly, whose feeble ray scarce spreads
An inch around, with blind presumption bold,
Should dare to tax the structure of the whole.
And lives the man, whose universal eye
Has swept at once the unbounded scheme of things;
Mark'd their dependance so, and firm accord,
As with unfaltering accent to conclude
That this availeth nought? Has any seen
The mighty chain of beings, lessening down
From Infinite Perfection to the brink
Of dreary nothing, desolate abyss!
From which astonish'd thought, recoiling, turns?
Till then alone let zealous praise ascend,
And hymns of holy wonder, to that Power,
Whose wisdom shines as lovely on our minds,
As on our smiling eyes his servant-sun.

Thick in yon stream of light, a thousand ways,
Upward, and downward, thwarting, and convolved,
The quivering nations sport; till, tempest-wing'd,
Fierce Winter sweeps them from the face of day.
E'en so luxurious men, unheeding, pass
An idle summer life in fortune's shine,
A season's glitter! thus they flutter on
From toy to toy, from vanity to vice;
Till, blown away by death, oblivion comes
Behind, and strikes them from the book of life.

Now swarms the village o'er the jovial mead:
The rustic youth, brown with meridian toil,
Healthful and strong; full as the summer-rose
Blown by prevailing suns, the ruddy maid,
Half naked, swelling on the sight, and all
Her kindled graces burning o'er her cheek.
E'en stooping age is here; and infant hands
Trail the long rake, or, with the fragrant load
O'ercharged, amid the kind oppression roll.
Wide flies the tedded grain; all in a row
Advancing broad, or wheeling round the field,
They spread the breathing harvest to the sun,
That throws refreshful round a rural smell:
Or, as they rake the green-appearing ground,
And drive the dusky wave along the mead,
The russet hay-cock rises thick behind,
In order gay. While heard from dale to dale,
Waking the breeze, resounds the blended voice
Of happy labour, love, and social glee.

Or rushing thence, in one diffusive band,
They drive the troubled flocks, by many a dog
Compell'd, to where the mazy-running brook
Forms a deep pool; this bank abrupt and high,
And that fair-spreading in a pebbled shore.
Urged to the giddy brink, much is the toil,
The clamour much, of men, and boys, and dogs,
Ere the soft fearful people to the flood
Commit their woolly sides. And oft the swain,
On some impatient seizing, hurls them in:
Embolden'd then, nor hesitating more,
Fast, fast, they plunge amid the flashing wave,
And panting labour to the farthest shore.
Repeated this, till deep the well-wash'd fleece
Has drunk the flood, and from his lively haunt,
The trout is banish'd by the sordid stream;
Heavy, and dripping, to the breezy brow
Slow move the harmless race: where, as they spread
Their swelling treasures to the sunny ray,
Inly disturb'd, and wondering what this wild
Outrageous tumult means, their loud complaints
The country fill; and, toss'd from rock to rock,
Incessant bleatings run around the hills.
At last, of snowy white, the gather'd flocks
Are in the wattled pen innumerous press'd,
Head above head: and ranged in lusty rows
The shepherds sit, and whet the sounding shears.
The housewife waits to roll her fleecy stores,
With all her gay-drest maids attending round.
One, chief, in gracious dignity enthroned,
Shines o'er the rest, the pastoral queen, and rays
Her smiles, sweet-beaming, on her shepherd-king;
While the glad circle round them yield their souls
To festive mirth, and wit that knows no gall.
Meantime, their joyous task goes on apace:
Some mingling stir the melted tar, and some,
Deep on the new-shorn vagrant's heaving side,
To stamp the master's cypher ready stand;
Others the unwilling wether drag along;
And, glorying in his might, the sturdy boy
Holds by the twisted horns the indignant ram.
Behold where bound, and of its robe bereft,
By needy man, that all-depending lord,
How meek, how patient, the mild creature lies!
What softness in its melancholy face,
What dumb complaining innocence appears!
Fear not, ye gentle tribes, 'tis not the knife
Of horrid slaughter that is o'er you waved;
No, 'tis the tender swain's well-guided shears,
Who having now, to pay his annual care,
Borrow'd your fleece, to you a cumbrous load,
Will send you bounding to your hills again.

A simple scene! yet hence Britannia sees
Her solid grandeur rise: hence she commands
The exalted stores of every brighter clime,
The treasures of the sun without his rage:
Hence, fervent all, with culture, toil, and arts,
Wide glows her land: her dreadful thunder hence
Rides o'er the waves sublime, and now, e'en now,
Impending hangs o'er Gallia's humbled coast;
Hence rules the circling deep, and awes the world.

'Tis raging noon; and, vertical, the sun
Darts on the head direct his forceful rays.
O'er heaven and earth, far as the ranging eye
Can sweep, a dazzling deluge reigns; and all
From pole to pole is undistinguish'd blaze.
In vain the sight, dejected, to the ground
Stoops for relief; thence hot-ascending steams
And keen reflection pain. Deep to the root

Of vegetation parch'd, the cleaving fields
And slippery lawn an arid hue disclose,
Blast Fancy's bloom, and wither e'en the soul.
Echo no more returns the cheerful sound
Of sharpening scythe: the mower sinking heaps
O'er him the humid hay, with flowers perfumed;
And scarce a chirping grasshopper is heard
Through the dumb mead. Distressful Nature pants.
The very streams look languid from afar;
Or, through the unsheltered glade, impatient, seem
To hurl into the covert of the grove.

All-conquering Heat, oh intermit thy wrath!
And on my throbbing temples potent thus
Beam not so fierce! incessant still you flow,
And still another fervent flood succeeds,
Pour'd on the head profuse. In vain I sigh,
And restless turn, and look around for night;
Night is far off; and hotter hours approach.
Thrice happy he! who on the sunless side
Of a romantic mountain, forest-crown'd,
Beneath the whole collected shade reclines:
Or in the gelid caverns, woodbine-wrought,
And fresh bedew'd with ever-spouting streams,
Sits coolly calm; while all the world without,
Unsatisfied, and sick, tosses in noon.
Emblem instructive of the virtuous man,
Who keeps his temper'd mind serene and pure,
And every passion aptly harmonized,
Amid a jarring world with vice inflamed.

Welcome, ye shades! ye bowery thickets, hail!
Ye lofty pines! ye venerable oaks!
Ye ashes wild, resounding o'er the steep!
Delicious is your shelter to the soul,
As to the hunted hart the sallying spring,
Or stream full-flowing, that his swelling sides
Laves, as he floats along the herbaged brink.
Cool, through the nerves, your pleasing comfort glides;
The heart beats glad; the fresh-expanded eye
And ear resume their watch; the sinews knit;
And life shoots swift through all the lighten'd limbs.

Around the adjoining brook, that purls along
The vocal grove, now fretting o'er a rock,
Now scarcely moving through a reedy pool,
Now starting to a sudden stream, and now
Gently diffused into a limpid plain;
A various group the herds and flocks compose,
Rural confusion! on the grassy bank
Some ruminating lie; while others stand
Half in the flood, and often bending sip
The circling surface. In the middle droops
The strong laborious ox, of honest front,
Which incomposed he shakes; and from his sides
The troublous insects lashes with his tail,
Returning still. Amid his subjects safe,
Slumbers the monarch-swain; his careless arm
Thrown round his head, on downy moss sustain'd;
Here laid his scrip, with wholesome viands fill'd;
There, listening every noise, his watchful dog.
Light fly his slumbers, if perchance a flight
Of angry gad-flies fasten on the herd;
That startling scatters from the shallow brook,
In search of lavish stream. Tossing the foam,
They scorn the keeper's voice, and scour the plain,
Through all the bright severity of noon;
While, from their labouring breasts, a hollow moan
Proceeding, runs low-bellowing round the hills.

Oft in this season too the horse, provoked,
While his big sinews full of spirits swell,
Trembling with vigour, in the heat of blood,
Springs the high fence; and, o'er the field effused,
Darts on the gloomy flood, with steadfast eye,
And heart estranged to fear: his nervous chest,
Luxuriant, and erect, the seat of strength!
Bears down the opposing stream: quenchless his thirst;
He takes the river at redoubled draughts;
And with wide nostrils, snorting, skims the wave.

Still let me pierce into the midnight depth
Of yonder grove, of wildest largest growth:
That, forming high in air a woodland quire,
Nods o'er the mount beneath. At every step,
Solemn and slow, the shadows blacker fall,
And all is awful listening gloom around.

These are the haunts of Meditation, these
The scenes where ancient bards the inspiring breath,
Ecstatic, felt; and, from this world retired,
Conversed with angels, and immortal forms,
On gracious errands bent: to save the fall
Of virtue struggling on the brink of vice;
In waking whispers, and repeated dreams,
To hint pure thought, and warn the favour'd soul
For future trials fated to prepare;
To prompt the poet, who devoted gives
His muse to better themes; to sooth the pangs
Of dying worth, and from the patriot's breast
(Backward to mingle in detested war,
But foremost when engaged) to turn the death;
And numberless such offices of love,
Daily, and nightly, zealous to perform.

Shook sudden from the bosom of the sky
A thousand shapes or glide athwart the dusk,
Or stalk majestic on. Deep-roused, I feel
A sacred terror, a severe delight,
Creep through my mortal frame; and thus, methinks,
A voice than human more, the abstracted ear
Of fancy strikes:—"Be not of us afraid,
Poor kindred man! thy fellow-creatures, we
From the same Parent-Power our beings drew,
The same our Lord, and laws, and great pursuit.
Once some of us, like thee, through stormy life,
Toil'd, tempest-beaten, ere we could attain
This holy calm, this harmony of mind,
Where purity and peace immingle charms.
Then fear not us; but with responsive song
Amid these dim recesses, undisturb'd

By noisy folly and discordant vice,
Of Nature sing with us, and Nature's God.
Here frequent, at the visionary hour,
When musing midnight reigns or silent noon,
Angelic harps are in full concert heard,
And voices chanting from the wood-crown'd hill,
The deepening dale, or inmost sylvan glade:
A privilege bestow'd by us, alone,
On Contemplation, or the hallow'd ear
Of poet, swelling to seraphic strain."
And art thou, Stanley,* of that sacred band?
Alas, for us too soon! though raised above
The reach of human pain, above the flight
Of human joy; yet, with a mingled ray
Of sadly pleased remembrance, must thou feel
A mother's love, a mother's tender woe:
Who seeks thee still, in many a former scene;
Seeks thy fair form, thy lovely beaming eyes,
Thy pleasing converse, by gay lively sense
Inspired: where moral wisdom mildly shone,
Without the toil of art; and virtue glow'd,
In all her smiles, without forbidding pride.
But, O thou best of parents! wipe thy tears;
Or rather to Parental Nature pay
The tears of grateful joy, who for a while
Lent thee this younger self, this opening bloom
Of thy enlighten'd mind and gentle worth.
Believe the Muse: the wintry blast of death
Kills not the buds of virtue; no, they spread,
Beneath the heavenly beam of brighter suns,
Through endless ages, into higher powers.
Thus up the mount, in airy vision wrapt,
I stray, regardless whither; till the sound
Of a near fall of water every sense
Wakes from the charm of thought: swift-shrinking back,
I check my steps, and view the broken scene.
Smooth to the shelving brink a copious flood
Rolls fair, and placid; where collected all,
In one impetuous torrent, down the steep
It thundering shoots, and shakes the country round.
At first, an azure sheet, it rushes broad;
Then whitening by degrees, as prone it falls,
And from the loud resounding rocks below
Dash'd in a cloud of foam, it sends aloft
A hoary mist, and forms a ceaseless shower.
Nor can the tortured wave here find repose:
But, raging still amid the shaggy rocks,
Now flashes o'er the scatter'd fragments, now
Aslant the hollow channel rapid darts;
And falling fast from gradual slope to slope,
With wild infracted course, and lessen'd roar,
It gains a safer bed, and steals, at last,
Along the mazes of the quiet vale.
Invited from the cliff, to whose dark brow
He clings, the steep-ascending eagle soars,
With upward pinions through the flood of day,
And, giving full his bosom to the blaze,
Gains on the sun; while all the tuneful race,
Smit by afflictive noon, disordered droop,
Deep in the thicket; or, from bower to bower
Responsive, force an interrupted strain.
The stock-dove only through the forest coos,
Mournfully hoarse; oft ceasing feom his plaint,
Short interval of weary wo! again
The sad idea of his murder'd mate,
Struck from his side by savage fowler's guile,
Across his fancy comes; and then resounds
A louder song of sorrow through the grove.
Beside the dewy border let me sit,
All in the freshness of the humid air:
There in that hollow'd rock, grotesque and wild,
An ample chair moss-lined, and over head
By flowering umbrage shaded; where the bee
Strays diligent; and with the extracted balm
Of fragrant woodbine loads his little thigh.
Now, while I taste the sweetness of the shade
While Nature lies around deep-hull'd in noon,
Now come, bold Fancy, spread a daring flight,
And view the wonders of the torrid zone:
Climes unrelenting! with whose rage compared,
Yon blaze is feeble, and yon skies are cool.
See, how at once the bright effulgent sun,
Rising direct, swift chases from the sky
The short-lived twilight; and with ardent blaze
Looks gaily fierce through all the dazzling air:
He mounts his throne; but kind before him sends,
Issuing from out the portals of the morn,
The general breeze,* to mitigate his fire,
And breathe refreshment on a fainting world.
Great are the scenes, with dreadful beauty crown'd
And barbarous wealth, that see, each circling year,
Returning suns and double seasons† pass:
Rocks rich in gems, and mountains big with mines,
That on the high equator ridgy rise,
Whence many a bursting stream auriferous plays:
Majestic woods, of every vigorous green,
Stage above stage, high waving o'er the hills;
Or to the fair horizon wide diffused,
A boundless deep immensity of shade.
Here lofty trees, to ancient song unknown,
The noble sons of potent heat and floods
Prone-rushing from the clouds, rear high to Heaven
Their thorny stems, and broad around them throw
Meridian gloom. Here, in eternal prime,
Unnumbered fruits of keen delicious taste
And vital spirit, drink amid the cliffs,

* A young lady, who died at the age of eighteen, in the year 1738, upon whom Thomson wrote an Epitaph.

* Which blows constantly between the tropics from the east, or the collateral points, the north east and south-east; caused by the pressure of the rarefied air on that before it, according to the diurnal motion of the sun from east to west.

† In all climates between the tropics, the sun, as he passes and repasses in his annual motion, is twice a year vertical, which produces this effect.

And burning sands that bank the shrubby vales,
Redoubled day, yet in their rugged coats
A friendly juice to cool its rage contain.
Bear me, Pomono! to thy citron groves;
To where the lemon and the piercing lime,
With the deep orange, glowing through the green,
Their lighter glories blend. Lay me reclined
Beneath the spreading tamarind that shakes,
Fann'd by the breeze, its fever-cooling fruit.
Deep in the night the massy locust sheds,
Quench my hot limbs; or lead me through the maze,
Embowering endless, of the Indian fig;
Or thrown at gayer ease, on some fair brow,
Let me behold, by breezy murmurs cool'd,
Broad o'er my head, the verdant cedar wave,
And high palmetos lift their graceful shade.
Or stretch'd amid these orchards of the sun,
Give me to drain the cocoa's milky bowl,
And from the palm to draw its freshening wine!
More bounteous far than all the frantic juice
Which Bacchus pours. Nor, on its slender twigs
Low-bending, be the full pomegranate scorn'd;
Nor, creeping through the woods, the gelid race
Of berries. Oft in humble station dwells
Unboastful worth, above fastidious pomp.
Witness, thou best Anana, thou the pride
Of vegetable life, beyond whate'er
The poets imaged in the golden age:
Quick let me strip thee of thy tufty coat,
Spread thy ambrosial stores, and feast with Jove!
From these the prospect varies. Plains immense
Lie stretch'd below, interminable meads
And vast savannahs, where the wandering eye,
Unfix'd, is in a verdant ocean lost.
Another Flora there, of bolder hues,
And richer sweets, beyond our garden's pride,
Plays o'er the fields, and showers with sudden hand
Exuberant spring: for oft those valleys shift
Their green embroider'd robe to fiery brown,
And swift to green again, as scorching suns,
Or streaming dews and torrent rains, prevail.
Along these lonely regions, where, retired
From little scenes of art, great Nature dwells
In awful solitude, and nought is seen
But the wild herds that own no master's stall
Prodigious rivers roll their fattening seas:
On whose luxuriant herbage, half conceal'd,
Like a fallen cedar, far diffused his train,
Cased in green scales, the crocodile extends.
The flood disparts: behold! in plaited mail
Behemoth* rears his head. Glanced from his side,
The darted steel in idle shivers flies:
He fearless walks the plain, or seeks the hills;
Where, as he crops his varied fare, the herds,
In widening circle round, forget their food,
And at the harmless stranger wondering gaze.

Peaceful, beneath primeval trees, that cast
Their ample shade o'er Niger's stream,
And where the Ganges rolls his sacred wave;
Or mid the central depth of blackening woods,
High raised in solemn theatre around,
Leans the huge elephant: wisest of brutes!
O truly wise, with gentle might endow'd,
Though powerful, not destructive! here he sees
Revolving ages sweep the changeful earth,
And empires rise and fall; regardless he
Of what the never-resting race of men
Project: thrice happy! could he 'scape their guile,
Who mine, from cruel avarice, his steps;
Or with his towery grandeur swell their state,
The pride of kings! or else his strength pervert,
And bid him rage amid the mortal fray,
Astonish'd at the madness of mankind.
Wide o'er the winding umbrage of the floods,
Like vivid blossoms glowing from afar,
Thick swarm the brighter birds. For Nature's hand,
That with a sportive vanity has deck'd
The plumy nations, there her gayest hues
Profusely pours.* But, if she bids them shine,
Array'd in all the beauteous beams of day,
Yet frugal still, she humbles them in song.
Nor envy we the gaudy robes they lent
Proud Montezuma's realm, whose legions cast
A boundless radiance waving on the sun,
While Philomel is ours; while in our shades,
Through the soft silence of the listening night,
The sober-suited songstress thrills her lay.
But come, my muse, the desert-barrier burst,
A wild expanse of lifeless sand and sky:
And, swifter than the toiling caravan,
Shoot o'er the vale of Sennar; ardent climb
The Nubian mountains, and the secret bounds
Of jealous Abyssinia boldly pierce.
Thou art no ruffian, who beneath the mask
Of social commerce comest to rob their wealth;
No holy fury thou, blaspheming Heaven,
With consecrated steel to stab their peace,
And through the land, yet red from civil wounds,
To spread the purple tyranny of Rome.
Thou, like the harmless bee, mayest freely range,
From mead to mead bright with exalted flowers,
From jasmine grove to grove mayst wander gay,
Through palmy shades and aromatic woods,
That grace the plains, invest the peopled hills,
And up the more than Alpine mountains wave.
There on the breezy summit, spreading fair,
For many a league; or on stupendous rocks,
That from the sun-redoubling valley lift,
Cool to the middle air, their lawny tops;
Where palaces, and fanes, and villas rise;
And gardens smile around, and cultured fields;

* The hippopotamus, or river-horse.

* In all the regions of the torrid zone the birds, though more beautiful in their plumage, are observed to be less melodious then ours.

And fountains gush; and careless herds and flocks
Securely stray; a world within itself,
Disdaining all assault: there let me draw
Ethereal soul, there drink reviving gales,
Profusely breathing from the spicy groves,
And vales of fragrance; there at distance hear
The roaring floods, and cataracts, that sweep
From disembowel'd earth the virgin gold;
And o'er the varied landscape, restless, rove,
Fervent with life of every fairer kind:
A land of wonders! which the sun still eyes
With ray direct, as of the lovely realm
Enamour'd, and delighting there to dwell.
  How changed the scene! in blazing height of noon,
The sun, oppress'd, is plunged in thickest gloom,
Still horror reigns, a dreary twilight round,
Of struggling night and day malignant mix'd.
For to the hot equator crowding fast,
Where, highly rarefied, the yielding air
Admits their stream, incessant vapours roll,
Amazing clouds on clouds continual heap'd;
Or whirl'd tempestuous, by the gusty wind,
Or silent borne along, heavy and slow,
With the big stores of steaming oceans charged.
Meantime, amid these upper seas, condensed
Around the cold aerial mountain's brow,
And by conflicting winds together dash'd,
The thunder holds his black tremendous throne;
From cloud to cloud the rending lightnings rage;
Till, in the furious elemental war
Dissolved, the whole precipitated mass
Unbroken floods and solid torrents pours.
  The treasures these, hid from the bounded search
Of ancient knowledge; whence, with annual pomp,
Rich king of floods! o'erflows the swelling Nile.
From his two springs, in Gojam's sunny realm,
Pure welling out, he through the lucid lake
Of fair Dambea rolls his infant stream.
There, by the naiads nursed, he sports away
His playful youth, amid the fragrant isles,
That with unfading verdure smile around.
Ambitious, thence the manly river breaks;
And gathering many a flood, and copious fed
With all the mellow'd treasures of the sky,
Winds in progressive majesty along:
Through splendid kingdoms now devolves his maze,
Now wanders wild o'er solitary tracts
Of life-deserted sand; till, glad to quit
The joyless desert, down the Nubian rocks
From thundering steep to steep, he pours his urn,
And Egypt joys beneath the spreading wave.
  His brother Niger too, and all the floods
In which the full-form'd maids of Afric lave
Their jetty limbs; and all that from the tract
Of woody mountain stretch'd through gorgeous Ind
Fall on Cor'mandel's coast, or Malabar;
From Menam's* orient stream, that nightly shines
With insect-lamps, to where Aurora sheds
On Indus' smiling banks the rosy shower:
All, at this bounteous season, ope their urns,
And pour untoiling harvest o'er the land.
  Nor less thy world, Columbus, drinks, refresh'd,
The lavish moisture of the melting year.
Wide o'er his isles, the branching Oronoque
Rolls a brown deluge; and the native drives
To dwell aloft on life-sufficing trees,
At once his dome, his robe, his food, and arms.
Swell'd by a thousand streams, impetuous hurl'd
From all the roaring Andes, huge descends
The mighty Orellana.† Scarce the Muse
Dares stretch her wing o'er this enormous mass
Of rushing water; scarce she dares attempt
The sea-like Plata; to whose dread expanse,
Continuous depth, and wondrous length of course,
Our floods are rills. With unabated force,
In silent dignity they sweep along,
And traverse realms unknown, and blooming wilds,
And fruitful deserts, worlds of solitude,
Where the sun smiles and seasons teem in vain,
Unseen and unenjoy'd. Forsaking these,
O'er peopled plains they fair-diffusive flow,
And many a nation feed, and circle safe,
In their soft bosom, many a happy isle;
The seat of blameless Pan, yet undisturb'd
By Christian crimes, and Europe's cruel sons.
Thus pouring on they proudly seek the deep,
Whose vanquish'd tide recoiling from the shock,
Yields to the liquid weight of half the globe,
And Ocean trembles for his green domain.
  But what avails this wondrous waste of wealth?
This gay profusion of luxurious bliss?
This pomp of Nature? what their balmy meads,
Their powerful herbs, and Ceres void of pain?
By vagrant birds dispersed and wafting winds,
What their unplanted fruits? what the cool draughts,
The ambrosial food, rich gums, and spicy health,
Their forests yield? their toiling insects what?
Their silky pride, and vegetable robes?
Ah! what avail their fatal treasures, hid
Deep in the bowels of the pitying earth,
Golconda's gems, and sad Potosi's mines;
Where dwelt the gentlest children of the sun?
What all that Afric's golden rivers roll,
Her odorous woods, and shining ivory stores?
Ill-fated race! the softening arts of Peace,
Whate'er the humanizing Muses teach;
The godlike wisdom of the temper'd breast

* The river that runs through Siam: on whose banks a vast multitude of those insects, called fire-flies, make a beautiful appearance in the night.

† The river of the Amazons.

Progressive truth, the patient force of thought;
Investigation calm, whose silent powers
Command the world; the light that leads to Heaven;
Kind equal rule, the government of laws,
And all-protecting Freedom, which alone
Sustains the name and dignity of man:
These are not theirs. The parent sun himself
Seems o'er this world of slaves to tyrannize;
And, with oppressive ray, the roseate bloom
Of beauty blasting, gives the gloomy hue,
And feature gross: or worse, to ruthless deeds,
Mad jealousy, blind rage, and fell revenge,
Their fervid spirit fires. Love dwells not there,
The soft regards, the tenderness of life,
The heart-shed tear, the ineffable delight
Of sweet humanity: these court the beam
Of milder climes; in selfish fierce desire,
And the wild fury of voluptuous sense,
There lost. The very brute-creation there
This rage partakes, and burns with horrid fire.

Lo! the green serpent, from his dark abode,
Which even Imagination fears to tread,
At noon forth-issuing, gathers up his train
In orbs immense, then, darting out anew,
Seeks the refreshing fount; by which diffused,
He throws his folds: and while, with threatening tongue
And deathful jaws erect, the monster curls
His flaming crest, all other thirst appall'd,
Or shivering flies or check'd at distance stands,
Nor dares approach. But still more direful he,
The small close-lurking minister of fate,
Whose high-concocted venom through the veins
A rapid lightning darts, arresting swift
The vital current. Form'd to humble man,
This child of vengeful Nature! there, sublimed
To fearless lust of blood, the savage race
Roam, licensed by the shading hour of guilt,
And foul misdeed, when the pure day has shut
His sacred eye. The tiger darting fierce
Impetuous on the prey his glance has doom'd:
The lively shining leopard, speckled o'er
With many a spot, the beauty of the waste;
And, scorning all the taming arts of man,
The keen hyena, fellest of the fell.
These, rushing from the inhospitable woods
Of Mauritania, or the tufted isles,
That verdant rise amid the Libyan wild,
Innumerous glare around their shaggy king
Majestic, stalking o'er the printed sand;
And, with imperious and repeated roars,
Demand their fated food. The fearful flocks
Crowd near the guardian swain; the nobler herds,
Where round their lordly bull, in rural ease
They ruminating lie, with horror hear
The coming rage. The awaken'd village starts;
And to her fluttering breast the mother strains
Her thoughtless infant. From the pyrate's den,
Or stern Morocco's tyrant fang escaped,
The wretch half wishes for his bonds again:
While, uproar all, the wilderness resounds,
From Atlas eastward to the frighted Nile.

Unhappy he! who from the first of joys,
Society, cut off, is left alone
Amid this world of death. Day after day,
Sad on the jutting eminence he sits,
And views the main that ever toils below;
Still fondly forming in the farthest verge,
Where the round ether mixes with the wave,
Ships, dim-discover'd dropping from the clouds;
At evening, to the setting sun he turns
A mournful eye, and down his dying heart
Sinks helpless; while the wonted roar is up,
And hiss continual through the tedious night.
Yet here, e'en here, into these black abodes
Of monsters, unappall'd, from stooping Rome,
And guilty Cæsar, Liberty retired,
Her Cato following through Numidian wilds:
Disdainful of Campania's gentle plains,
And all the green delights Ausonia pours;
When for them she must bend the servile knee,
And fawning take the splendid robber's boon.

Nor stop the terrors of these regions here.
Commission'd demons oft, angels of wrath,
Let loose the raging elements. Breathed hot
From all the boundless furnace of the sky,
And the wide glittering waste of burning sand,
A suffocating wind the pilgrim smites
With instant death. Patient of thirst and toil,
Son of the desert! e'en the camel feels,
Shot through his wither'd heart, the fiery blast.
Or from the black-red ether, bursting broad,
Sallies the sudden whirlwind. Straight the sands,
Commoved around, in gathering eddies play:
Nearer and nearer still they darkening come;
Till, with the general all-involving storm
Swept up, the whole continuous wild arise;
And by their noonday fount dejected thrown
Or sunk at night in sad disastrous sleep,
Beneath descending hills, the caravan
Is buried deep. In Cairo's crowded streets
The impatient merchant, wondering, waits in vain,
And Mecca saddens at the long delay.

But chief at sea, whose every flexile wave
Obeys the blast, the aerial tumult swells.
In the dread ocean, undulating wide,
Beneath the radiant line that girts the globe,
The circling Typhon,* whirl'd from point to point,
Exhausting all the rage of all the sky,
And dire Ecnephia* reign. Amid the heavens,
Falsely serene, deep in a cloudy speck†
Compress'd, the mighty tempest brooding dwells:

* Typhon and Ecnephia, names of particular storms or hurricanes, known only between the tropics.

† Called by sailors the Ox-eye, being in appearance at first no bigger.

Of no regard, save to the skilful eye,
Fiery and foul, the small prognostic hangs
Aloft, or on the promontory's brow
Musters its force. A faint deceitful calm,
A fluttering gale, the demon sends before,
To tempt the spreading sail. Then down at once,
Precipitant, descends a mingled mass
Of roaring winds, and flame, and rushing floods.
In wild amazement fix'd the sailor stands.
Art is too slow: by rapid fate oppress'd,
His broad-winged vessel drinks the whelming tide,
Hid in the bosom of the black abyss.
With such mad seas the daring Gama* fought,
For many a day, and many a dreadful night,
Incessant, labouring round the stormy Cape;
By bold ambition led, and bolder thirst
Of gold. For then from ancient gloom emerged
The rising world of trade: the Genius, then,
Of navigation, that, in hopeless sloth,
Had slumber'd on the vast Atlantic deep,
For idle ages, starting, heard at last
The Lusitanian Prince;† who, Heaven-inspired,
To love of useful glory roused mankind,
And in unbounded commerce mix'd the world.

Increasing still the terrors of these storms,
His jaws horrific arm'd with threefold fate,
Here dwells the direful shark. Lured by the scent
Of steaming crowds, of rank disease, and death,
Behold! he rushing cuts the briny flood,
Swift as the gale can bear the ship along;
And, from the partners of that cruel trade,
Which spoils unhappy Guinea of her sons,
Demands his share of prey; demands themselves.
The stormy fates descend: one death involves
Tyrants and slaves; when straight, their mangled limbs
Crashing at once, he dyes the purple seas
With gore, and riots in the vengeful meal.

When o'er this world, by equinoctial rains
Flooded immense, looks out the joyless sun,
And draws the copious stream: from swampy fens,
Where putrefaction into life ferments,
And breathes destructive myriads; or from woods,
Impenetrable shades, recesses foul,
In vapours rank and blue corruption wrapt,
Whose gloomy horrors yet no desperate foot
Has ever dared to pierce; then, wasteful, forth
Walks the dire Power of pestilent disease.
A thousand hideous fiends her course attend,
Sick Nature blasting, and to heartless woe,
And feeble desolation, casting down
The towering hopes and all the pride of Man.
Such as, of late, at Carthagena quench'd
The British fire. You, gallant Vernon, saw
The miserable scene, you pitying, saw
To infant-weakness sunk the warrior's arm;
Saw the deep-racking pang, the ghastly form,
The lip pale quivering, and the beamless eye
No more with ardour bright: you heard the groan
Of agonizing ships, from shore to shore;
Heard, nightly plunged amid the sullen waves,
The frequent corse; while on each other fix'd,
In sad presage, the blank assistants seem'd,
Silent, to ask, whom Fate would next demand.

What need I mention those inclement skies,
Where, frequent o'er the sickening city, Plague,
The fiercest child of Nemesis divine,
Descends? From Ethiopia's poison'd woods,
From stifled Cairo's filth, and fetid fields
With locust-armies putrefying heap'd,
This great destroyer sprung. Her awful rage
The brutes escape: Man is her destined prey,
Intemperate Man! and, o'er his guilty domes,
She draws a close incumbent cloud of death;
Uninterrupted by the living winds,
Forbid to blow a wholesome breeze; and stain'd
With many a mixture by the sun, suffused,
Of angry aspect. Princely wisdom, then,
Dejects his watchful eye; and from the hand
Of feeble justice, ineffectual, drop
The sword and balance: mute the voice of joy,
And hush'd the clamour of the busy world.
Empty the streets, with uncouth verdure clad;
Into the worst of deserts sudden turn'd
The cheerful haunt of men: unless escaped
From the doom'd house, where matchless horror reigns,
Shut up by barbarous fear, the smitten wretch,
With frenzy wild, breaks loose; and, loud to Heaven
Screaming, the dreadful policy arraigns,
Inhuman, and unwise. The sullen door,
Yet uninfected, on its cautious hinge
Fearing to turn, abhors society:
Dependants, friends, relations, Love himself,
Savaged by woe, forget the tender tie,
The sweet engagement of the feeling heart.
But vain their selfish care: the circling sky,
The wide enlivening air is full of fate;
And, struck by turns, in solitary pangs
They fall, unblest, untended, and unmourn'd.
Thus o'er the prostrate city black Despair
Extends her raven wing: while, to complete
The scene of desolation, stretch'd around,
The grim guards stand, denying all retreat,
And give the flying wretch a better death.

Much yet remains unsung: the rage intense
Of brazen-vaulted skies, of iron fields,
Where drought and famine starve the blasted year:
Fired by the torch of noon to tenfold rage,
The infuriate hill that shoots the pillar'd flame;
And, roused within the subterranean world,
The expanding earthquake, that resistless shakes

* Vasco de Gama, the first who sailed round Africa, by the Cape of Good Hope, to the East Indies.

† Don Henry, third son to John the First, King of Portugal. His strong genius to the discovery of new countries was the chief source of all the modern improvements in navigation.

Aspiring cities from their solid base,
And buries mountains in the flaming gulf.
But 'tis enough; return, my vagrant Muse:
A nearer scene of horror calls thee home.
Behold, slow-settling o'er the lurid grove
Unusual darkness broods, and growing gains
The full possession of the sky, surcharged
With wrathful vapour, from the secret beds,
Where sleep the mineral generations, drawn.
Thence nitre, sulphur, and the fiery spume
Of fat bitumen, steaming on the day,
With various-tinctured trains of latent flame,
Pollute the sky, and in yon baleful cloud,
A reddening gloom, a magazine of fate,
Ferment; till, by the touch ethereal roused,
The dash of clouds, or irritating war
Of fighting winds, while all is calm below,
They furious spring. A boding silence reigns,
Dread through the dun expanse; save the dull sound
That from the mountain, previous to the storm,
Rolls o'er the muttering earth, disturbs the flood,
And shakes the forest-leaf without a breath.
Prone, to the lowest vale, the aerial tribes
Descend: the tempest-loving raven scarce
Dares wing the dubious dusk. In rueful gaze
The cattle stand, and on the scowling heavens
Cast a deploring eye, by man forsook,
Who to the crowded cottage hies him fast,
Or seeks the shelter of the downward cave.
'Tis listening fear, and dumb amazement all:
When to the startled eye the sudden glance
Appears far south, eruptive through the cloud;
And following slower, in explosion vast,
The Thunder raises his tremendous voice.
At first, heard solemn o'er the verge of Heaven,
The tempest growls; but as it nearer comes,
And rolls its awful burden on the wind,
The lightnings flash a larger curve, and more
The noise astounds: till over head a sheet
Of livid flame discloses wide; then shuts,
And opens wider; shuts and opens still
Expansive, wrapping ether in a blaze.
Follows the loosen'd aggravated roar,
Enlarging, deepening, mingling; peal on peal
Crush'd horrible, convulsing heaven and earth.
Down comes a deluge of sonorous hail,
Or prone-descending rain. Wide-rent, the clouds
Pour a whole flood; and yet, its flame unquench'd,
The unconquerable lightning struggles through,
Ragged and fierce, or in red whirling balls,
And fires the mountains with redoubled rage.
Black from the stroke, above, the smouldring pine
Stands a sad shatter'd trunk; and, stretch'd below,
A lifeless group the blasted cattle lie:
Here the soft flocks, with that same harmless look
They wore alive, and ruminating still
In fancy's eye; and there the frowning bull,
And ox half-raised. Struck on the castled cliff,
The venerable tower and spiry fane
Resign their aged pride. The gloomy woods
Start at the flash, and from their deep recess,
Wide-flaming out, their trembling inmates shake.
Amid Carnarvon's mountains rages loud
The repercussive roar: with mighty crush,
Into the flashing deep, from the rude rocks
Of Penmanmaur heap'd hideous to the sky,
Tumble the smitten cliffs; and Snowden's peak,
Dissolving, instant yields his wintry load.
Far seen, the heights of heathy Cheviot blaze,
The Thulè bellows through her utmost isles.
Guilt hears appall'd, with deeply troubled thought.
And yet not always on the guilty head
Descends the fated flash. Young Celadon
And his Amelia were a matchless pair;
With equal virtue form'd, and equal grace,
The same, distinguish'd by their sex alone:
Hers the mild lustre of the blooming morn,
And his the radiance of the risen day.
They lov'd: but such the guileless passion was,
As in the dawn of time inform'd the heart
Of innocence and undissembling truth.
'Twas friendship, heighten'd by the mutual wish;
The enchanting hope, and sympathetic glow,
Beam'd from the mutual eye. Devoting all
To love, each was to each a dearer self;
Supremely happy in the awaken'd power
Of giving joy. Alone, amid the shades,
Still in harmonious intercourse they lived
The rural day, and talk'd the flowing heart,
Or sigh'd and look'd unutterable things.
So pass'd their life, a clear united stream,
By care unruffled; till, in an evil hour,
The tempest caught them on the tender walk,
Heedless how far and where its mazes stray'd,
While with each other blest, creative love
Still bade eternal Eden smile around.
Presaging instant fate, her bosom heaved
Unwonted sighs, and stealing oft a look
Of the big gloom, on Celadon her eye
Fell tearful, wetting her disorder'd cheek.
In vain assuring love, and confidence
In Heaven, repress'd her fear; it grew, and shook
Her frame near dissolution. He perceived
The unequal conflict, and as angels look
On dying saints, his eyes compassion shed,
With love illumined high. "Fear not," he said,
"Sweet innocence! thou stranger to offence,
And inward storm! He, who yon skies involves
In frowns of darkness, ever smiles on thee
With kind regard. O'er thee the secret shaft
That wastes at midnight, or the undreaded hour
Of noon, flies harmless: and that very voice,
Which thunders terror through the guilty heart,
With tongues of seraphs whispers peace to thine.
'Tis safety to be near thee sure, and thus
To clasp perfection!" From his void embrace,
(Mysterious Heaven!) that moment, to the ground,

A blacken'd corse, was struck the beauteous maid.
But who can paint the lover, as he stood,
Pierced by severe amazement, hating life,
Speechless, and fix'd in all the death of woe!
So, faint resemblance! on the marble tomb,
The well-dissembled mourner stooping stands,
For ever silent and for ever sad.

As from the face of Heaven the shatter'd clouds
Tumultuous rove, the interminable sky
Sublimer swells, and o'er the world expands
A purer azure. Through the lighten'd air
A higher lustre and a clearer calm,
Diffusive, tremble; while, as if in sign
Of danger past, a glittering robe of joy,
Set off abundant by the yellow ray,
Invests the fields; and nature smiles revived.

'Tis beauty all, and grateful song around,
Join'd to the low of kine, and numerous bleat
Of flocks thick-nibbling through the clover'd vale.
And shall the hymn be marr'd by thankless Man,
Most-favoured! who with voice articulate
Should lead the chorus of this lower world;
Shall he, so soon forgetful of the Hand
That hush'd the thunder, and serenes the sky,
Extinguish'd feel that spark the tempest waked,
That sense of powers exceeding far his own,
Ere yet his feeble heart has lost its fears?

Cheer'd by the milder beam, the sprightly youth
Speeds to the well-known pool, whose crystal depth
A sandy bottom shows. Awhile he stands
Gazing the inverted landscape, half afraid
To meditate the blue profound below;
Then plunges headlong down the circling flood.
His ebon tresses, and his rosy cheek
Instant emerge; and through the obedient wave,
At each short breathing by his lip repell'd,
With arms and legs according well, he makes,
As humour leads, an easy-winding path;
While, from his polish'd sides, a dewy light
Effuses on the pleased spectators round.

This is the purest exercise of health,
The kind refresher of the summer-heats;
Nor when cold Winter keens the brightening flood,
Would I weak-shivering linger on the brink.
Thus life redoubles, and is oft preserved,
By the bold swimmer, in the swift elapse
Of accident disastrous. Hence the limbs
Knit into force; and the same Roman arm,
That rose victorious o'er the conquer'd earth,
First learn'd, while tender, to subdue the wave.
Even from the body's purity the mind
Receives a secret sympathetic aid.

Close in the covert of a hazel copse,
Where, winded into pleasing solitudes,
Runs out the rambling dale, young Damon sat,
Pensive, and pierc'd with love's delightful pangs.
There to the stream that down the distant rocks
Hoarse-murmuring fell, and plaintive breeze that play'd
Among the bending willows, falsely he
Of Musidora's cruelty complain'd.
She felt his flame; but deep within her breast
In bashful coyness, or in maiden pride,
The soft return conceal'd; save when it stole
In sidelong glances from her downcast eye,
Or from her swelling soul in stifled sighs.
Touch'd by the scene, no stranger to his vows,
He framed a melting lay, to try her heart;
And, if an infant passion struggled there,
To call that passion forth. Thrice happy swain!
A lucky chance that oft decides the fate
Of mighty monarchs, then decided thine.
For lo! conducted by the laughing Loves,
This cool retreat his Musidora sought:
Warm in her cheek the sultry season glow'd;
And, robed in loose array, she came to bathe
Her fervent limbs in the refreshing stream.
What shall he do? In sweet confusion lost,
And dubious flutterings, he a while remain'd:
A pure ingenuous elegance of soul,
A delicate refinement, known to few,
Perplex'd his breast, and urged him to retire:
But love forbade. Ye prudes in virtue, say,
Say, ye severest, what would you have done?
Meantime, this fairer nymph than ever blest
Arcadian stream, with timid eye around
The banks surveying, stripp'd her beauteous limbs,
To taste the lucid coolness of the flood.
Ah then! not Paris on the piny top
Of Ida panted stronger, when aside
The rival-goddesses the veil divine
Cast unconfined, and gave him all their charms,
Than, Damon, thou; as from the snowy leg,
And slender foot, the inverted silk she drew;
As the soft touch dissolved the virgin zone:
And, through the parting robe, the alternate breast,
With youth wild-throbbing, on thy lawless gaze
In full luxuriance rose. But, desperate youth
How durst thou risk the soul-distracting view,
As from her naked limbs of glowing white,
Harmonious swell'd by Nature's finest hand,
In folds loose floating fell the fainter lawn;
And fair exposed she stood, shrunk from herself,
With fancy blushing, at the doubtful breeze
Alarm'd, and starting like the fearful fawn?
Then to the flood she rush'd; the parted flood
Its lovely guest with closing waves received;
And every beauty softening, every grace
Flushing anew, a mellow lustre shed:
As shines the lily through the crystal mild;
Or as the rose amid the morning dew,
Fresh from Aurora's hand, more sweetly glows,
While thus she wanton'd, now beneath the wave
But ill-conceal'd; and now with streaming locks,
That half-embraced her in a humid veil,
Rising again, the latent Damon drew
Such maddening draughts of beauty to the soul,
As for a while o'erwhelm'd his raptured thought

With luxury too daring. Check'd, at last,
By love's respectful modesty, he deem'd
The theft profane, if aught profane to love
Can e'er be deem'd; and struggling from the shade,
With headlong hurry fled: but first these lines,
Traced by his ready pencil, on the bank
With trembling hand he threw:—'Bathe on, my fair,
Yet unbeheld save by the sacred eye
Of faithful love: I go to guard thy haunt,
To keep from thy recess each vagrant foot,
And each licentious eye.' With wild surprise,
As if to marble struck, devoid of sense,
A stupid moment motionless she stood:
So stands the statue* that enchants the world,
So bending tries to veil the matchless boast,
The mingled beauties of exulting Greece.
Recovering, swift she flew to find those robes
Which blissful Eden knew not; and, array'd
In careless haste, the alarming paper snatch'd.
But, when her Damon's well known hand she saw,
Her terrors vanish'd, and a softer train
Of mix'd emotions, hard to be described,
Her sudden bosom seized: shame void of guilt,
The charming blush of innocence, esteem,
And admiration of her lover's flame,
By modesty exalted: e'en a sense
Of self-approving beauty stole across
Her busy thought. At length a tender calm
Hush'd by degrees the tumult of her soul;
And on the spreading beech, that o'er the stream
Incumbent hung, she with the sylvan pen
Of rural lovers this confession carved,
Which soon her Damon kiss'd with weeping joy:
'Dear youth! sole judge of what these verses mean,
By fortune too much favour'd, but by love,
Alas! not favour'd less, be still as now
Discreet: the time may come you need not fly.'
The sun has lost his rage: his downward orb
Shoots nothing now but animating warmth
And vital lustre; that with various ray
Lights up the clouds, those beauteous robes of Heaven,
Incessant roll'd into romantic shapes,
The dream of waking fancy! broad below,
Cover'd with ripening fruits, and swelling fast
Into the perfect year, the pregnant earth
And all her tribes rejoice. Now the soft hour
Of walking comes: for him who lonely loves
To seek the distant hills, and there converse
With Nature; there to harmonize his heart,
And in pathetic song to breathe around
The harmony to others. Social friends,
Attuned to happy unison of soul;
To whose exalting eye a fairer world,
Of which the vulgar never had a glimpse,
Displays its charms; whose minds are richly fraught
With philosophic stores, superior light;
And in whose breast, enthusiastic, burns
Virtue, the sons of interest deem romance;
Now call'd abroad enjoy the falling day:
Now to the verdant Portico of woods,
To Nature's vast Lyceum forth they walk;
By that kind School where no proud master reigns,
The full free converse of the friendly heart,
Improving and improved. Now from the world,
Sacred to sweet retirement, lovers steal,
And pour their souls in transport, which the Sire
Of love approving hears, and calls it good.
Which way, Amanda, shall we bend our course?
The choice perplexes. Wherefore should we choose?
All is the same with thee. Say, shall we wind
Along the streams? or walk the smiling mead?
Or court the forest glades? or wander wild
Among the waving harvests? or ascend,
While radiant Summer opens all its pride,
Thy hill, delightful Shene?* Here let us sweep
The boundless landscape: now the raptured eye,
Exulting swift, to huge Augusta send,
Now to the Sister-Hills† that skirt her plain,
To lofty Harrow now, and now to where
Majestic Windsor lifts his princely brow.
In lovely contrast to this glorious view
Calmly magnificent, then will we turn
To where the silver Thames first rural grows.
There let the feasted eye unwearied stray:
Luxurious, there, rove through the pendant woods
That nodding hang o'er Harrington's retreat;
And, stooping thence to Ham's embowering walks,
Beneath whose shades, in spotless peace retired,
With Her the pleasing partner of his heart,
The worthy Queensberry yet laments his Gay,
And polish'd Cornbury woos the willing Muse,
Slow let us trace the matchless vale of Thames;
Fair winding up to where the Muses haunt
In Twit'nam's bowers, and for their Pope implore
The healing God;‡ to royal Hampton's pile,
To Clermont's terraced height, and Esher's groves,
Where in the sweetest solitude, embraced
By the soft windings of the silent Mole,
From courts and senates Pelham finds repose.
Inchanting vale! beyond whate'er the Muse
Has of Achaia or Hesperia sung!

* The Venus of Medici.

* The old name of Richmond, signifying in Saxon Shining, or Splendour.
† Highgate and Hampstead.
‡ In his last sickness.

O vale of bliss! O softly swelling hills!
On which the Power of Cultivation lies,
And joys to see the wonders of his toil.
Heavens! what a goodly prospect spreads around,
Of hills, and dales, and woods, and lawns, and spires,
And glittering towns, and gilded streams, till all
The stretching landscape into smoke decays!
Happy Britannia! where the Queen of Arts,
Inspiring vigour, Liberty abroad
Walks, unconfined, even to thy farthest cots,
And scatters plenty with unsparing hand.
Rich is thy soil, and merciful thy clime;
Thy streams unfailing in the Summer's drought;
Unmatch'd thy guardian oaks; thy valleys float
With golden waves: and on thy mountains flocks
Bleat numberless! while, roving round their sides,
Bellow the blackening herds in lusty droves.
Beneath, thy meadows glow, and rise unquell'd
Against the mower's scythe. On every hand
Thy villas shine. Thy country teems with wealth;
And property assures it to the swain,
Pleased and unwearied, in his guarded toil.
Full are thy cities with the sons of Art;
And trade and joy, in every busy street,
Mingling are heard; e'en Drudgery himself,
As at the car he sweats, or dusty hews
The palace stone, looks gay. Thy crowded ports,
Where rising masts an endless prospect yield,
With labour burn, and echo to the shouts
Of hurried sailor, as he hearty waves
His last adieu, and loosening every sheet,
Resigns the spreading vessel to the wind.
Bold, firm, and graceful are thy generous youth,
By hardship sinew'd, and by danger fired,
Scattering the nations where they go; and first
Or on the listed plain, or stormy seas.
Mild are thy glories too, as o'er the plans
Of thriving peace thy thoughtful sires preside;
In genius, and substantial learning, high;
For every virtue, every worth renown'd;
Sincere, plain-hearted, hospitable, kind;
Yet like the mustering thunder when provoked,
The dread of tyrants, and the sole resource
Of those that under grim oppression groan.
Thy sons of Glory many! Alfred thine,
In whom the splendour of heroic war,
And more heroic peace, when govern'd well,
Combine; whose hallow'd name the Virtues saint,
And his own Muses love; the best of kings!
With him thy Edwards and thy Henries shine,
Names dear to fame; the first who deep impress'd
On haughty Gaul the terror of thy arms,
That awes her genius still. In statesmen thou,
And patriots, fertile. Thine a steady More,
Who, with a generous though mistaken zeal,
Withstood a brutal tyrant's useful rage,
Like Cato firm, like Aristides just,
Like rigid Cincinnatus nobly poor,
A dauntless soul erect, who smiled on death.
Frugal and wise, a Walsingham is thine,
A Drake, who made thee mistress of the deep,
And bore thy name in thunder round the world.
Then flamed thy spirit high: but who can speak
The numerous worthies of the Maiden Reign?
In Raleigh mark their every glory mix'd;
Raleigh, the scourge of Spain! whose breast with a
The sage, the patriot, and the hero burn'd,
Nor sunk his vigour, when a coward-reign
The warrior fetter'd, and at last resigned,
To glut the vengeance of a vanquish'd foe.
Then active still and unrestrain'd, his mind
Explored the vast extent of ages past,
And with his prison-hours enrich'd the world;
Yet found no times, in all the long research,
So glorious, or so base, as those he proved,
In which he conquer'd, and in which he bled.
Nor can the Muse the gallant Sidney pass,
The plume of war! with early laurels crown'd,
The lover's myrtle, and the poet's bay.
A Hampden too is thine, illustrious land,
Wise, strenuous, firm, of unsubmitting soul,
Who stemm'd the torrent of a downward age
To slavery prone, and bade thee rise again,
In all thy native pomp of freedom bold.
Bright, at his call, thy Age of Men effulged,
Of Men on whom late time a kindling eye
Shall turn, and tyrants tremble while they read.
Bring every sweetest flower, and let me strew
The grave where Russel lies; whose temper'd blood
With calmest cheerfulness for thee resign'd,
Stain'd the sad annals of a giddy reign;
Aiming at lawless power, though meanly sunk
In loose inglorious luxury. With him
His friend, the British Cassius,* fearless bled;
Of high determined spirit, roughly brave,
By ancient learning to the enlighten'd love
Of ancient freedom warm'd. Fair thy renown
In awful sages and in noble bards;
Soon as the light of dawning Science spread
Her orient ray, and waked the Muses' song.
Thine is a Bacon; hapless in his choice,
Unfit to stand the civil storm of state,
And through the smooth barbarity of courts,
With firm but pliant virtue, forward still
To urge his course: him for the studious shade
Kind Nature form'd, deep, comprehensive, clear,
Exact, and elegant: in one rich soul,
Plato, the Stagyrite, and Tully join'd.
The great deliverer he! who from the gloom
Of cloister'd monks, and jargon-teaching schools,
Let forth the true philosophy, there long
Held in the magic chain of words and forms,
And definitions void: he led her forth,
Daughter of Heaven! that slow-ascending still,
Investigating sure the chain of things,

* Algernon Sidney.

With radiant finger points to Heaven again.
The generous Ashley* thine, the friend of man;
Who scann'd his nature with a brother's eye,
His weakness prompt to shade, to raise his aim,
To touch the finer movements of the mind,
And with the moral beauty charm the heart.
Why need I name thy Boyle, whose pious search
Amid the dark recesses of his works,
The great Creator sought? And why thy Locke,
Who made the whole internal world his own?
Let Newton, pure intelligence, whom God
To mortals lent, to trace His boundless works
From laws sublimely simple, speak thy fame
In all philosophy. For lofty sense,
Creative fancy, and inspection keen
Through the deep windings of the human heart,
Is not wild Shakspeare thine and Nature's boast?
Is not each great, each amiable Muse
Of classic ages in thy Milton met?
A genius universal as his theme;
Astonishing as chaos, as the bloom
Of blowing Eden fair, as Heaven sublime!
Nor shall my verse that elder bard forget,
The gentle Spenser, fancy's pleasing son;
Who, like a copious river, pour'd his song
O'er all the mazes of enchanted ground;
Nor thee, his ancient master, laughing sage,
Chaucer, whose native manners-painting verse,
Well moralised, shines through the gothic cloud
Of time and language o'er thy genius thrown.

May my song soften as thy daughters I,
Britannia, hail! for beauty is their own,
The feeling heart, simplicity of life,
And elegance and taste: the faultless form,
Shaped by the hand of harmony; the cheek,
Where the live crimson, through the native white
Soft-shooting, o'er the face diffuses bloom,
And every nameless grace; the parted lip,
Like the red rose bud moist with morning dew,
Breathing delight; and, under flowing jet,
Or sunny ringlets, or of circling brown,
The neck slight-shaded, and the swelling breast;
The look resistless, piercing to the soul,
And by the soul inform'd, when dress'd in love
She sits high smiling in the conscious eye.

Island of bliss! amid the subject seas,
That thunder round thy rocky coast, set up,
At once the wonder, terror, and delight
Of distant nations; whose remotest shores
Can soon be shaken by thy naval arm;
Not to be shook thyself, but all assaults
Baffling, as thy hoar cliffs the loud sea-wave.

O Thou! by whose Almighty nod the scale
Of empire rises, or alternate falls,
Send forth the saving Virtues round the land,
In bright patrol: white Peace and social Love;
The tender-looking Charity, intent
On gentle deeds, and shedding tears through smiles;
Undaunted Truth, and Dignity of mind:
Courage composed, and keen: sound Temperance,
Healthful in heart and look; clear Chastity,
With blushes reddening as she moves along,
Disorder'd at the deep regard she draws;
Rough Industry; Activity untired,
With copious life inform'd, and all awake:
While in the radiant front, superior shines
That first paternal virtue, Public Zeal;
Who throws o'er all an equal wide survey,
And, ever musing on the common weal,
Still labours glorious with some great design.

Low walks the sun, and broadens by degrees,
Just o'er the verge of day. The shifting clouds
Assembled gay, a richly gorgeous train,
In all their pomp attend his setting throne.
Air, earth, and ocean, smile immense. And now,
As if his weary chariot sought the bowers
Of Amphitrite, and her tending nymphs,
(So Grecian fable sung) he dips his orb;
Now half-immersed; and now a golden curve
Gives one bright glance, then total disappears.

For ever running an enchanted round
Passes the day, deceitful, vain, and void;
As flects the vision o'er the formful brain,
This moment hurrying wild the impassion'd soul,
The next in nothing lost. 'Tis so to him,
The dreamer of this earth, an idle blank:
A sight of horror to the cruel wretch,
Who all day long in sordid pleasure roll'd,
Himself a useless load, has squander'd vile,
Upon his scoundrel train, what might have cheer'd
A drooping family of modest worth.
But to the generous still-improving mind,
That gives the hopeless heart to sing for joy,
Diffusing kind beneficence around,
Boastless, as now descends the silent dew;
To him the long review of order'd life
Is inward rapture, only to be felt.

Confess'd from yonder slow-extinguish'd clouds,
All ether softening, sober Evening takes
Her wonted station in the middle air;
A thousand shadows at her beck. First this
She sends on earth; then that of deeper dye
Steals soft behind; and then a deeper still,
In circle following circle, gathers round,
To close the face of things. A fresher gale
Begins to wave the wood, and stir the stream,
Sweeping with shadowy gust the fields of corn,
While the quail clamours for his running mate.
Wide o'er the thistly lawn, as swells the breeze,
A whitening shower of vegetable down
Amusive floats. The kind impartial care
Of Nature nought disdains: thoughtful to feed
Her lowest sons, and clothe the coming year,
From field to field the feather'd seed she wings.

His folded flock secure, the shepherd home
Hies, merry-hearted; and by turns relieves

* Anthony Ashley Cooper, Earl of Shaftesbury.

The ruddy milk-maid of her brimming pail;
The beauty whom perhaps his witless heart,
Unknowing what the joy-mix'd anguish means,
Sincerely loves, by that best language shown
Of cordial glances, and obliging deeds.
Onward they pass, o'er many a panting height,
And valley sunk, and unfrequented; where
At fall of eve the fairy people throng,
In various game, and revelry, to pass
The summer night, as village stories tell.
But far about they wander from the grave
Of him, whom his ungentle fortune urged
Against his own sad breast to lift the hand
Of impious violence. The lonely tower
Is also shunn'd; whose mournful chambers hold,
So night-struck Fancy dreams, the yelling ghost.
Among the crooked lanes, on every hedge,
The glow-worm lights his gem; and through the dark
A moving radiance twinkles. Evening yields
The world to Night; not in her winter-robe
Of massy stygian woof, but loose array'd
In mantle dun. A faint erroneous ray,
Glanced from the imperfect surfaces of things,
Flings half an image on the straining eye;
While wavering woods, and villages, and streams,
And rocks, and mountain-tops, that long retain'd
The ascending gleam, are all one swimming scene,
Uncertain if beheld. Sudden to Heaven
Thence weary vision turns; where, leading soft
The silent hours of love, with purest ray
Sweet Venus shines; and from her genial rise,
When day-light sickens till it springs afresh,
Unrival'd reigns the fairest lamp of Night.
As thus the effulgence tremulous I drink,
With cherish'd gaze, the lambent lightnings shoot
Across the sky; or horizontal dart
In wondrous shapes: by fearful murmuring crowds
Portentous deem'd. Amid the radiant orbs,
That more than deck, that animate the sky,
The life-infusing suns of other worlds:
Lo! from the dread immensity of space
Returning, with accelerated course,
The rushing comet to the sun descends;
And as he sinks below the shading earth,
With awful train projected o'er the heavens,
The guilty nations tremble. But, above
Those superstitious horrors that enslave
The fond sequacious herd, to mystic faith
And blind amazement prone, the enlighten'd few,
Whose godlike minds philosophy exalts,
The glorious stranger hail. They feel a joy
Divinely great; they in their powers exult,
That wondrous force of thought, which mounting spurns
This dusky spot, and measures all the sky;
While, from his far excursion through the wilds
Of barren ether, faithful to his time,
They see the blazing wonder rise anew,
In seeming terror clad, but kindly bent
To work the will of all-sustaining Love:
From his huge vapoury train perhaps to shake
Reviving moisture on the numerous orbs,
Through which his long ellipsis wind; perhaps
To lend new fuel to declining suns,
To light up worlds, and feed the eternal fire.
With thee, serene Philosophy, with thee,
And thy bright garland, let me crown my song!
Effusive source of evidence, and truth!
A lustre shedding o'er the ennobled mind,
Stronger than summer-noon; and pure as that,
Whose mild vibrations sooth the parted soul,
New to the dawning of celestial day.
Hence through her nourish'd powers, enlarged by thee,
She springs aloft, with elevated pride,
Above the tangling mass of low desires,
That bind the fluttering crowd; and, angel-wing'd,
The heights of science and of virtue gains,
Where all is calm and clear; with Nature round,
Or in the starry regions, or the abyss,
To Reason's and to Fancy's eye display'd:
The First up-tracing, from the dreary void,
The chain of causes and effects to Him,
The world-producing Essence, who alone
Possesses being; while the Last receives
The whole magnificence of heaven and earth,
And every beauty, delicate or bold,
Obvious or more remote, with livelier sense,
Diffusive painted on the rapid mind.
Tutor'd by thee, hence Poetry exalts
Her voice to ages; and informs the page
With music, image, sentiment, and thought,
Never to die! the treasure of mankind!
Their highest honour, and their truest joy!
Without thee what were unenlightened Man?
A savage roaming through the woods and wilds,
In quest of prey; and with the unfashion'd fur
Rough-clad; devoid of every finer art,
And elegance of life. Nor happiness
Domestic, mix'd of tenderness and care,
Nor moral excellence, nor social bliss,
Nor guardian law were his; nor various skill
To turn the furrow, or to guide the tool
Mechanic; nor the heaven-conducted prow
Of navigation bold, that fearless braves
The burning line or dares the wintry pole;
Mother severe of infinite delights!
Nothing, save rapine, indolence, and guile,
And woes on woes, a still-revolving train!
Whose horrid circle had made human life
Than non-existence worse: but, taught by thee,
Ours are the plans of policy and peace;
To live like brothers, and conjunctive all
Embellish life. While thus laborious crowds
Ply the tough oar, Philosophy directs

The ruling helm; or like the liberal breath
Of potent Heaven, invisible, the sail
Swells out, and bears the inferior world along.
Nor to this evanescent speck of earth
Poorly confined, the radiant tracts on high
Are her exalted range; intent to gaze
Creation through; and, from that full complex
Of never ending wonders, to conceive
Of the Sole Being right, who spoke the Word,
And Nature moved complete. With inward view,
Thence on the ideal kingdom swift she turns
Her eye; and instant, at her powerful glance,
The obedient phantoms vanish or appear;
Compound, divide, and into order shift,
Each to his rank, from plain perception up
To the fair forms of Fancy's fleeting train:
To reason then, deducing truth from truth;
And notion quite abstract; where first begins
The world of spirits, action all, and life
Unfetter'd, and unmixt. But here the cloud,
(So wills Eternal Providence) sits deep.
Enough for us to know that this dark state
In wayward passions lost and vain pursuits,
This Infancy of Being, cannot prove
The final issue of the works of God,
By boundless Love and perfect Wisdom form'd,
And ever rising with the rising mind

Autumn.

INSCRIBED TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE ARTHUR ONSLOW, ESQ.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

ARGUMENT.

The subject proposed. Addressed to Mr. Onslow. A prospect of the Fields ready for Harvest. Reflections in praise of Industry raised by that view. Reaping. A Tale relative to it A Harvest Storm. Shooting and Hunting; their barbarity. A ludicrous account of Foxhunting. A view of an Orchard. Wall Fruit. A Vineyard. A description of Fogs, frequent in the latter part of Autumn; whence a digression, inquiring into the rise of Fountains and Rivers. Birds of season considered, that now shift their Habitation. The prodigious number of them that cover the Northern and Western Isles of Scotland. Hence a view of the Country. A prospect of the discoloured, fading Woods. After a gentle dusky day, Moonlight. Autumnal Meteors. Morning: to which succeeds a calm, pure, sunshiny Day, such as usually shuts up the season. The Harvest being gathered in, the Country dissolved in joy. The whole concludes with a Panegyric on a philosophical Country Life.

Crown'd with the sickle and the wheaten sheaf,
While Autumn, nodding o'er the yellow plain,
Comes jovial on; the Doric reed once more,
Well pleas'd, I tune. Whate'er the wintry frost
Nitrous prepared; the various blossom'd Spring
Put in white promise forth; and Summer-suns
Concocted strong, rush boundless now to view,
Full, perfect all, and swell my glorious theme.
Onslow! the Muse, ambitious of thy name,
To grace, inspire, and dignify her song,
Would from the public voice thy gentle ear
A while engage. Thy noble cares she knows,
The patriot virtues that distend thy thought,
Spread on thy front, and in thy bosom glow;
While listening senates hang upon thy tongue,
Devolving through the maze of eloquence
A roll of periods, sweeter than her song.
But she too pants for public virtue, she,
Though weak of power, yet strong in ardent will,
Whene'er her country rushes on her heart,
Assumes a bolder note, and fondly tries
To mix the patriot's with the poet's flame.
When the bright Virgin gives the beauteous days,
And Libra weighs in equal scales the year;
From Heaven's high cope the fierce effulgence shook
Of parting Summer, a serener blue,
With golden light enliven'd, wide invests
The happy world. Attemper'd suns arise,
Sweet-beam'd, and shedding oft through lucid clouds
A pleasing calm; while broad, and brown, below
Extensive harvests hang the heavy head.
Rich, silent, deep, they stand; for not a gale
Rolls its light billows o'er the bending plain;
A calm of plenty! till the ruffled air
Falls from its poise, and gives the breeze to blow.
Rent is the fleecy mantle of the sky;
The clouds fly different; and the sudden sun
By fits effulgent gilds the illumined field,
And black by fits the shadows sweep along
A gaily chequer'd heart-expanding view,
Far as the circling eye can shoot around,
Unbounded tossing in a flood of corn,
These are thy blessings, Industry! rough power!
Whom labour still attends, and sweat, and pain;
Yet the kind source of every gentle art,
And all the soft civility of life:
Raiser of human kind! by Nature cast,
Naked, and helpless, out amid the woods
And wilds, to rude inclement elements;
With various seeds of art deep in the mind
Implanted, and profusely pour'd around
Materials infinite, but idle all.
Still unexerted, in the conscious breast,
Slept the lethargic powers; Corruption still,
Voracious, swallow'd what the liberal hand

Of bounty scatter'd o'er the savage year:
And still the sad barbarian, roving, mix'd
With beasts of prey; or for his acorn meal
Fought the fierce tusky boar; a shivering wretch!
Aghast, and comfortless, when the bleak north,
With Winter charged, let the mix'd tempest fly,
Hail, rain, and snow, and bitter-breathing frost:
Then to the shelter of the hut he fled;
And the wild season, sordid, pined away.
For home he had not; home is the resort
Of love, of joy, of peace and plenty, where,
Supporting and supported, polish'd friends,
And dear relations mingle into bliss.
But this the rugged savage never felt,
E'en desolate in crowds; and thus his days
Roll'd heavy, dark, and unenjoy'd along:
A waste of time! till Industry approach'd,
And roused him from his miserable sloth:
His faculties unfolded; pointed out,
Where lavish Nature the directing hand
Of art demanded; show'd him how to raise
His feeble force by the mechanic powers,
To dig the mineral from the vaulted earth,
On what to turn the piercing rage of fire,
On what the torrent, and the gather'd blast;
Gave the tall ancient forest to his axe;
Taught him to chip the wood, and hew the stone,
Till by degrees the finish'd fabric rose;
Tore from his limbs the blood-polluted fur,
And wrapt them in the woolly vestment warm,
Or bright in glossy silk, and flowing lawn;
With wholesome viands fill'd his table, pour'd
The generous glass around, inspired to wake
The life-refining soul of decent wit:
Nor stopp'd at barren bare necessity;
But still advancing bolder, led him on
To pomp, to pleasure, elegance, and grace;
And, breathing high ambition through his soul,
Set science, wisdom, glory, in his view,
And bade him be the Lord of all below.

Then gathering men their natural powers combined,
And form'd a Public; to the general good
Submitting, aiming, and conducting all.
For this the Patriot-Council met, the full,
The free, and fairly represented Whole;
For this they plann'd the holy guardian laws,
Distinguish'd orders, animated arts,
And with joint force Oppression chaining, set
Imperial Justice at the helm; yet still
To them accountable: nor slavish dream'd
That toiling millions must resign their weal,
And all the honey of their search, to such
As for themselves alone themselves have raised.

Hence every form of cultivated life
In order set, protected, and inspired,
Into perfection wrought. Uniting all,
Society grew numerous, high, polite,
And happy. Nurse of art! the city rear'd
In beauteous pride her tower-encircled head;
And, stretching street on street, by thousands drew,
From twining woody haunts, or the tough yew
To bows strong-straining, her aspiring sons.

Then Commerce brought into the public walk
The busy merchant; the big warehouse built;
Raised the strong crane; choked up the loaded street
With foreign plenty; and thy stream, O Thames,
Large, gentle, deep, majestic, king of floods!
Chose for his grand resort. On either hand,
Like a long wintry forest, groves of masts
Shot up their spires; the bellying sheet between
Possess'd the breezy void; the sooty hulk
Steer'd sluggish on; the splendid barge along
Row'd, regular, to harmony; around,
The boat, light-skimming, stretch'd its oary wings;
While deep the various voice of fervent toil
From bank to bank increased; whence ribb'd with oak,
To bear the British thunder, black, and bold,
The roaring vessel rush'd into the main.

Then too the pillar'd dome, magnific, heaved
Its ample roof; and Luxury within
Pour'd out her glittering stores: the canvass smooth,
With glowing life protuberant, to the view
Embodied rose; the statue seem'd to breathe,
And soften into flesh; beneath the touch
Of forming art, imagination-flush'd.

All is the gift of Industry; whate'er
Exalts, embellishes, and renders life
Delightful. Pensive Winter cheer'd by him
Sits at the social fire, and happy hears
The excluded tempest idly rave along;
His harden'd fingers deck the gaudy Spring;
Without him Summer were an arid waste;
Nor to the Autumnal months could thus transmit
Those full, mature, immeasurable stores,
That, waving round, recall my wandering song.

Soon as the morning trembles o'er the sky,
And, unperceived, unfolds the spreading day;
Before the ripen'd field the reapers stand,
In fair array, each by the lass he loves,
To bear the rougher part, and mitigate
By nameless gentle offices her toil.
At once they stoop, and swell the lusty sheaves;
While through their cheerful band the rural talk,
The rural scandal, and the rural jest,
Fly harmless, to deceive the tedious time,
And steal unfelt the sultry hours away.
Behind the master walks, builds up the shocks;
And, conscious, glancing oft on every side
His sated eye, feels his heart heave with joy.
The gleaners spread around, and here and there,
Spike after spike, their scanty harvest pick.
Be not too narrow, husbandmen! but fling
From the full sheaf, with charitable stealth,

The liberal handful. Think, oh grateful think!
How good the God of Harvest is to you;
Who pours abundance o'er your flowing fields;
While these unhappy partners of your kind
Wide-hover round you, like the fowls of heaven,
And ask their humble dole. The various turns
Of fortune ponder; that your sons may want
What now, with hard reluctance, faint, ye give.
The lovely young Lavinia once had friends;
And Fortune smiled, deceitful, on her birth.
For, in her helpless years deprived of all,
Of every stay, save Innocence and Heaven,
She with her widow'd mother, feeble, old,
And poor, lived in a cottage, far retired
Among the windings of a woody vale;
By solitude and deep surrounding shades,
But more by bashful modesty, conceal'd.
Together thus they shunn'd the cruel scorn
Which virtue, sunk to poverty, would meet
From giddy passion and low-minded pride:
Almost on Nature's common bounty fed;
Like the gay birds that sung them to repose,
Content, and careless of to-morrow's fare.
Her form was fresher than the morning rose,
When the dew wets its leaves; unstain'd and pure
As is the lily, or the mountain snow.
The modest Virtues mingled in her eyes,
Still on the ground dejected, darting all
Their humid beams into the blooming flowers:
Or when the mournful tale her mother told,
Of what her faithless fortune promised once,
Thrill'd in her thought, they, like the dewy star
Of evening, shone in tears. A native grace
Sat fair-proportion'd on her polish'd limbs,
Veil'd in a simple robe, their best attire,
Beyond the pomp of dress; for loveliness
Needs not the foreign aid of ornament,
But is when unadorn'd, adorn'd the most.
Thoughtless of beauty, she was Beauty's self,
Recluse amid the close-embowering woods.
As in the hollow breast of Appenine,
Beneath the shelter of encircling hills,
A myrtle rises, far from human eye,
And breathes its balmy fragrance o'er the wild;
So flourish'd blooming, and unseen by all,
The sweet Lavinia; till, at length, compell'd
By strong Necessity's supreme command,
With smiling patience in her looks, she went
To glean Palemon's fields. The pride of swains
Palemon was, the generous, and the rich;
Who led the rural life in all its joy
And elegance, such as Arcadian song
Transmits from ancient uncorrupted times;
When tyrant custom had not shackled man,
But free to follow Nature was the mode.
He then, his fancy with autumnal scenes
Amusing, chanced beside his reaper-train
To walk, when poor Lavinia drew his eye;
Unconscious of her power, and turning quick
With unaffected blushes from his gaze:
He saw her charming, but he saw not half
The charms her down-cast modesty conceal'd.
That very moment love and chaste desire
Sprung in his bosom, to himself unknown;
For still the world prevail'd and its dread laugh,
Which scarce the firm philosopher can scorn,
Should his heart own a gleaner in the field;
And thus in secret to his soul he sigh'd:—
"What pity! that so delicate a form,
By beauty kindled, where enlivening sense
And more than vulgar goodness seem to dwell,
Should be devoted to the rude embrace
Of some indecent clown! She looks, methinks,
Of old Acasto's line; and to my mind
Recalls that patron of my happy life,
From whom my liberal fortune took its rise;
Now to the dust gone down; his houses, lands,
And once fair-spreading family, dissolved.
'Tis said that in some lone obscure retreat,
Urged by remembrance sad, and decent pride,
Far from those scenes which knew their better days,
His aged widow and his daughter live,
Whom yet my fruitless search could never find.
Romantic wish! would this the daughter were!"
When, strict inquiring, from herself he found
She was the same, the daughter of his friend,
Of bountiful Acasto; who can speak
The mingled passions that surprised his heart,
And through his nerves in shivering transport ran?
Then blazed his smother'd flame, avow'd, and bold;
And as he view'd her, ardent, o'er and o'er,
Love, gratitude, and pity wept at once.
Confused, and frighten'd at his sudden tears,
Her rising beauties flush'd a higher bloom
As thus Palemon, passionate and just,
Pour'd out the pious rapture of his soul:
"And art thou then Acasto's dear remains?
She, whom my restless gratitude has sought,
So long in vain? O heavens! the very same,
The soften'd image of my noble friend;
Alive his every look, his every feature,
More elegantly touch'd. Sweeter than Spring!
Thou sole surviving blossom from the root
That nourish'd up my fortune! say, ah where,
In what sequester'd desert hast thou drawn
The kindest aspect of delighted Heaven?
Into such beauty spread, and blown so fair;
Though Poverty's cold wind and crushing rain
Beat keen and heavy on thy tender years?
O let me now into a richer soil
Transplant thee safe! where vernal suns and
showers
Diffuse their warmest, largest influence;
And of my garden be the pride and joy!
Ill it befits thee, oh, it ill befits
Acasto's daughter, his, whose open stores,
Though vast, were little to his ampler heart
The father of a country, thus to pick

The very refuse of those harvest fields,
Which from his bounteous friendship I enjoy.
Then throw that shameful pittance from thy hand,
But ill applied to such a rugged task;
The fields, the master, all, my fair, are thine;
If to the various blessings which thy house
Has on me lavish'd, thou wilt add that bliss,
That dearest bliss, the power of blessing thee!"
Here ceased the youth: yet still his speaking eye
Express'd the sacred triumph of his soul,
With conscious virtue, gratitude, and love,
Above the vulgar joy divinely raised.
Nor waited he reply. Won by the charm
Of goodness irresistible, and all
In sweet disorder lost, she blush'd consent.
The news immediate to her mother brought,
While, pierced with anxious thought, she pined away
The lonely moments for Lavinia's fate;
Amazed, and scarce believing what she heard,
Joy seized her wither'd veins, and one bright gleam
Of setting life shone on her evening hours:
Not less enraptured than the happy pair;
Who flourish'd long in tender bliss, and rear'd
A numerous offspring, lovely like themselves,
And good, the grace of all the country round.
Defeating oft the labours of the year,
The sultry south collects a potent blast.
At first, the groves are scarcely seen to stir
Their trembling tops; and a still murmur runs
Along the soft-inclining fields of corn.
But as the aërial tempest fuller swells,
And in one mighty stream, invisible,
Immense, the whole excited atmosphere
Impetuous rushes o'er the sounding world;
Strain'd to the root, the stooping forest pours
A rustling shower of yet untimely leaves.
High beat, the circling mountains eddy in,
From the bare wild, the dissipated storm,
And send it in a torrent down the vale.
Exposed, and naked, to its utmost rage,
Through all the sea of harvest rolling round,
The billowy plain floats wide; nor can evade,
Though pliant to the blast, its seizing force;
Or whirl'd in air, or into vacant chaff
Shook waste. And sometimes too a burst of rain,
Swept from the black horizon, broad, descends
In one continuous flood. Still over head
The mingling tempest weaves its gloom, and still
The deluge deepens; till the fields around
Lie sunk, and flatted, in the sordid wave.
Sudden, the ditches swell; the meadows swim.
Red, from the hills, innumerable streams
Tumultuous roar; and high above its banks
The river lift; before whose rushing tide
Herds, flocks, and harvests, cottages, and swains,
Roll mingled down; all that the winds had spared
In one wild moment ruin'd; the big hopes,
And well earn'd treasures of the painful year.
Fled to some eminence, the husbandman
Helpless beholds the miserable wreck
Driving along; his drowning ox at once
Descending, with his labours scatter'd round,
He sees; and instant o'er his shivering thought
Comes Winter unprovided, and a train
Of claimant children dear. Ye masters, then,
Be mindful of the rough laborious hand
That sinks you soft in elegance and ease;
Be mindful of those limbs in russet clad,
Whose toil to yours is warmth and graceful pride;
And, oh! be mindful of that sparing board,
Which covers yours with luxury profuse,
Makes your glass sparkle, and your sense rejoice!
Nor cruelly demand what the deep rains
And all-involving winds have swept away.
Here the rude clamour of the sportsman's joy,
The gun fast-thundering, and the winded horn,
Would tempt the muse to sing the rural game:
How in his mid-career the spaniel struck,
Stiff, by the tainted gale, with open nose,
Outstretch'd and finely sensible, draws full,
Fearful and cautious, on the latent prey;
As in the sun the circling covey bask
Their varied plumes, and watchful every way,
Through the rough stubble turn the secret eye.
Caught in the meshy snare, in vain they beat
Their idle wings, entangled more and more:
Nor on the surges of the boundless air,
Though borne triumphant, are they safe; the gun,
Glanced just, and sudden, from the fowler's eye,
O'ertakes their sounding pinions: and again,
Immediate, brings them from the towering wing,
Dead to the ground; or drives them wide dispersed,
Wounded, and wheeling various, down the wind.
These are not subjects for the peaceful Muse,
Nor will she stain with such her spotless song;
Then most delighted, when she social sees
The whole mix'd animal-creation round
Alive and happy. 'Tis not joy to her,
The falsely cheerful barbarous game of death,
This rage of pleasure, which the restless youth
Awakes, impatient, with the gleaming morn:
When beasts of prey retire, that all night long,
Urged by necessity, had ranged the dark,
As if their conscious ravage shunn'd the light,
Ashamed. Not so the steady tyrant Man,
Who with the thoughtless insolence of power
Inflamed, beyond the most infuriate wrath
Of the worst monster that e'er roam'd the waste,
For sport alone pursues the cruel chase,
Amid the beamings of the gentle days.
Upbraid, ye ravening tribes, our wanton rage,
For hunger kindles you, and lawless want;
But lavish fed, in Nature's bounty roll'd,
To joy at anguish, and delight in blood,
Is what your horrid bosoms never knew.
Poor is the triumph o'er the timid hare!
Scared from the corn, and now to some lone seat

Retired: the rushy fen; the ragged furze,
Stretch'd o'er the stony heath; the stubble chapt;
The thistly lawn; the thick entangled broom;
Of the same friendly hue, the wither'd fern;
The fallow ground laid open to the sun,
Concoctive; and the nodding sandy bank,
Hung o'er the mazes of the mountain brook.
Vain is her best precaution; though she sits
Conceal'd, with folded ears; unsleeping eyes,
By Nature raised to take the horizon in;
And head couch'd close betwixt her hairy feet,
In act to spring away. The scented dew
Betrays her early labyrinth; and deep,
In scatter'd sullen openings, far behind,
With every breeze she hears the coming storm.
But nearer, and more frequent, as it loads
The sighing gale, she springs amazed, and all
The savage soul of game is up at once:
The pack full-opening, various; the shrill horn
Resounded from the hills; the neighing steed,
Wild for the chase; and the loud hunter's shout;
O'er a weak, harmless, flying creature, all
Mix'd in mad tumult, and discordant joy.

The stag too, singled from the herd, where long
He ranged the branching monarch of the shades,
Before the tempest drives. At first, in speed
He, sprightly, puts his faith; and, roused by fear,
Gives all his swift aerial soul to flight;
Against the breeze he darts, that way the more
To leave the lessening murderous cry behind:
Deception short! though fleeter than the winds
Blown o'er the keen-air'd mountain by the north,
He bursts the thickets, glances through the glades,
And plunges deep into the wildest wood;
If slow, yet sure, adhesive to the track
Hot-steaming, up behind him come again
The inhuman rout, and from the shady depth
Expel him, circling through his every shift.
He sweeps the forest oft; and sobbing sees
The glades, mild opening to the golden day;
Where, in kind contest, with his butting friends
He wont to struggle, or his loves enjoy.
Oft in the full-descending flood he tries
To lose the scent, and lave his burning sides:
Oft seeks the herd; the watchful herd, alarm'd,
With selfish care avoid a brother's woe.
What shall he do? His once so vivid nerves,
So full of buoyant spirit, now no more
Inspire the course; but fainting breathless toil,
Sick, seizes on his heart; he stands at bay;
And puts his last weak refuge in despair.
The big round tears run down his dappled face;
He groans in anguish: while the growling pack,
Blood-happy, hang at his fair jutting chest,
And mark his beauteous chequer'd sides with gore.

Of this enough. But if the sylvan youth,
Whose fervent blood boils into violence,
Must have the chase; behold, despising flight,
The roused up lion, resolute, and slow,
Advancing full on the protended spear,
And coward band, that circling wheel aloof.
Slunk from the cavern, and the troubled wood,
See the grim wolf; on him his shaggy foe
Vindictive fix, and let the ruffian die:
Or, growling horrid, as the brindled boar
Grins fell destruction, to the monster's heart
Let the dart lighten from the nervous arm.

These Britain knows not; give, ye Britons, then
Your sportive fury, pitiless, to pour
Loose on the nightly robber of the fold
Him, from his craggy winding haunts unearth'd,
Let all the thunder of the chase pursue.
Throw the broad ditch behind you; o'er the hedge
High bound, resistless; nor the deep morass
Refuse, but through the shaking wilderness
Pick your nice way; into the perilous flood
Bear fearless, of the raging instinct full;
And as you ride the torrent, to the banks
Your triumph sound sonorous, running round,
From rock to rock, in circling echoes tost;
Then scale the mountains to their woody tops;
Rush down the dangerous steep; and o'er the lawn,
In fancy swallowing up the space between,
Pour all your speed into the rapid game.
For happy he! who tops the wheeling chase;
Has every maze evolved, and every guile
Disclosed; who knows the merits of the pack;
Who saw the villain seized, and dying hard,
Without complaint, though by a hundred mouths
Relentless torn: O glorious he, beyond
His daring peers! when the retreating horn
Call them to ghostly halls of gray renown,
With woodland honours graced; the fox's fur
Depending decent from the roof: and spread
Round the drear walls, with antic figures fierce,
The stag's large front: he then is loudest heard,
When the night staggers with severer toils,
With feats Thessalian Centaurs never knew,
And their repeated wonders shake the dome.

But first the fuel'd chimney blazes wide;
The tankards foam; and the strong table groans
Beneath the smoking sirloin, stretch'd immense
From side to side; in which, with desperate knife,
They deep incision make, and talk the while
Of England's glory, ne'er to be defaced
While hence they borrow vigour: or amain
Into the pasty plunged, at intervals,
If stomach keen can intervals allow,
Relating all the glories of the chase.
Then sated Hunger bids his brother Thirst
Produce the mighty bowl; the mighty bowl,
Swell'd high with fiery juice, steams liberal round
A potent gale, delicious, as the breath
Of Maia to the love-sick shepherdess,
On violets diffused, while soft she hears
Her panting shepherd stealing to her arms

Nor wanting is the brown October, drawn,
Mature and perfect, from his dark retreat
Of thirty years; and now his honest front
Flames in the light refulgent, not afraid
E'en with the vineyard's best produce to vie.
To cheat the thirsty moments, whist awhile
Walks his dull round beneath a cloud of smoke,
Wreath'd, fragrant, from the pipe; or the quick dice,
In thunder leaping from the box, awake
The sounding gammon: while romp-loving miss
Is haul'd about, in gallantry robust.
At last these puling idlenesses laid
Aside, frequent and full, the dry divan
Close in firm circle; and set, ardent, in
For serious drinking. Nor evasion sly,
Nor sober shift, is to the puking wretch
Indulged apart; but earnest, brimming bowls
Lave every soul, the table floating round,
And pavement, faithless to the fuddled foot.
Thus as they swim in mutual swill, the talk,
Vociferous at once from twenty tongues,
Reels fast from theme to theme; from horses, hounds,
To church or mistress, politics or ghost,
In endless mazes, intricate, perplex'd.
Meantime, with sudden interruption, loud,
The impatient catch bursts from the joyous heart,
That moment touch'd is every kindred soul;
And, opening in a full-mouth'd cry of joy,
The laugh, the slap, the jocund curse go round;
While, from their slumbers shook, the kennel'd hounds
Mix in the music of the day again.
As when the tempest, that has vex'd the deep
The dark night long, with fainter murmurs falls;
So gradual sinks their mirth. Their feeble tongues,
Unable to take up the cumbrous word,
Lie quite dissolved. Before their maudlin eyes,
Seen dim and blue, the double tapers dance,
Like the sun wading through the misty sky.
Then, sliding soft, they drop. Confused above,
Glasses and bottles, pipes and gazetteers,
As if the table e'en itself was drunk,
Lie a wet broken scene; and wide, below,
Is heap'd the social slaughter: where astride
The lubber Power in filthy triumph sits,
Slumbrous, inclining still from side to side,
And steeps them drench'd in potent sleep till morn.
Perhaps some doctor, of tremendous paunch,
Awful and deep, a black abyss of drink,
Outlives them all; and from his buried flock
Retiring, full of rumination sad,
Laments the weakness of these latter times.
But if the rougher sex by this fierce sport
Is hurried wild, let not such horrid joy
E'er stain the bosom of the British Fair.

Far be the spirit of the chase from them!
Uncomely courage, unbeseeming skill;
To spring the fence, to rein the prancing steed,
The cap, the whip, the masculine attire;
In which they roughen to the sense, and all
The winning softness of their sex is lost.
In them 'tis graceful to dissolve at wo;
With every motion, every word, to wave
Quick o'er the kindling cheek the ready blush;
And from the smallest violence to shrink
Unequal, then the loveliest in their fears;
And by this silent adulation, soft,
To their protection more engaging Man.
O may their eyes no miserable sight,
Save weeping lovers, see! a nobler game,
Through love's enchanting wiles pursued, yet fled,
In chase ambiguous. May their tender limbs
Float in the loose simplicity of dress!
And, fashion'd all to harmony, alone
Know they to seize the captivated soul
In rapture warbled from love-breathing lips;
To teach the lute to languish; with smooth step,
Disclosing motion in its every charm,
To swim along, and swell the mazy dance;
To train the foliage o'er the snowy lawn;
To guide the pencil, turn the tuneful page;
To lend new flavour to the fruitful year,
And heighten Nature's dainties: in their race
To rear their graces into second life;
To give society its highest taste;
Well order'd home man's best delight to make;
And by submissive wisdom, modest skill,
With every gentle care-eluding art,
To raise the virtues, animate the bliss,
And sweeten all the toils of human life:
This be the female dignity, and praise.
Ye swains, now hasten to the hazel bank;
Where, down yon dale, the widely winding brook
Falls hoarse from steep to steep. In close array,
Fit for the thickets and the tangling shrub,
Ye virgins, come. For you their latest song
The woodlands raise; the clustering nuts for you
The lover finds amid the secret shade;
And, where they burnish on the topmost bough,
With active vigour crushes down the tree;
Or shakes them ripe from the resigning husk,
A glossy shower, and of an ardent brown,
As are the ringlets of Melinda's hair:
Melinda! form'd with every grace complete;
Yet these neglecting, above beauty wise,
And far transcending such a vulgar praise.
Hence from the busy joy-resounding fields,
In cheerful error, let us tread the maze
Of Autumn, unconfined; and taste, revived,
The breath of orchard big with bending fruit,
Obedient to the breeze and beating ray,
From the deep-loaded bough a mellow shower
Incessant melts away. The juicy pear
Lies, in a soft profusion, scatter'd round.

A various sweetness swells the gentle race;
By Nature's all-refining hand prepared;
Of temper'd sun, and water, earth, and air,
In ever changing composition mix'd.
Such, falling frequent through the chiller night,
The fragrant stores, the wide projected heaps
Of apples, which the lusty-handed Year,
Innumerous, o'er the blushing orchard shakes.
A various spirit, fresh, delicious, keen,
Dwells in their gelid pores; and, active, points
The piercing cyder for the thirsty tongue:
Thy native theme, and boon inspirer too,
Philips, Pomona's bard, the second thou
Who nobly durst, in rhyme-unfetter'd verse,
With British freedom sing the British song:
How, from Silurian vats, high sparkling wines
Foam in transparent floods; some strong, to cheer
The wintry revels of the labouring hind;
And tasteful some, to cool the summer hours.

In this glad season, while his sweetest beams
The sun sheds equal o'er the meeken'd day;
Oh lose me in the green delightful walks
Of, Dodington, thy seat, serene and plain;
Where simple Nature reigns; and every view,
Diffusive, spreads the pure Dorsetian downs,
In boundless prospect; yonder shagg'd with wood,
Here rich with harvest, and there white with flocks!
Meantime the grandeur of thy lofty dome,
Far splendid, seizes on the ravish'd eye.
New beauties rise with each revolving day;
New columns swell; and still the fresh Spring finds
New plants to quicken, and new groves to green.
Full of thy genius all! the Muses' seat:
Where in the secret bower, and winding walk,
For virtuous Young and thee they twine the bay.
Here wandering oft, fired with the restless thirst
Of thy applause, I solitary court
The inspiring breeze: and meditate the book
Of Nature ever open; aiming thence,
Warm from the heart, to learn the moral song.
Here, as I steal along the sunny wall,
Where Autumn basks, with fruit empurpled deep,
My pleasing theme continual prompts my thought:
Presents the downy peach; the shining plum:
The ruddy, fragrant nectarine; and dark,
Beneath his ample leaf, the luscious fig.
The vine too here her curling tendrils shoots;
Hangs out her clusters, glowing to the south;
And scarcely wishes for a warmer sky.

Turn we a moment Fancy's rapid flight
To vigorous soils, and climes of fair extent;
Where, by the potent sun elated high,
The vineyard swells refulgent on the day;
Spreads o'er the vale; or up the mountain climbs,
Profuse; and drinks amid the sunny rocks,
From cliff to cliff increased, the heighten'd blaze.
Low bend the weighty boughs. The clusters clear,
Half through the foliage seen, or ardent flame,
Or shine transparent; while perfection breathes
White o'er the turgent film the living dew.
As thus they brighten with exalted juice,
Touch'd into flavour by the mingling ray;
The rural youth and virgins o'er the field,
Each fond for each to cull the autumnal prime,
Exulting rove, and speak the vintage nigh.
Then comes the crushing swain; the country floats,
And foams unbounded with the marshy flood;
That by degrees fermented and refined,
Round the raised nations pours the cup of joy:
The claret smooth, red as the lip we press
In sparkling fancy, while we drain the bowl;
The mellow-tasted burgundy; and quick,
As is the wit it gives, the gay champagne.

Now, by the cool declining year condensed,
Descend the copious exhalations, check'd
As up the middle sky unseen they stole,
And roll the doubling fogs around the hill.
No more the mountain, horrid, vast, sublime,
Who pours a sweep of rivers from his sides,
And high between contending kingdoms rears
The rocky long division, fills the view
With great variety; but in a night
Of gathering vapour, from the baffled sense
Sinks dark and dreary. Thence expanding far,
The huge dusk, gradual, swallows up the plain:
Vanish the woods: the dim-seen river seems
Sullen, and slow, to roll the misty wave.
E'en in the height of noon oppress'd, the sun
Sheds weak, and blunt, his wide-refracted ray;
Whence glaring oft, with many a broaden'd orb,
He frights the nations. Indistinct on earth,
Seen through the turbid air, beyond the life
Objects appear; and, wilder'd, o'er the waste
The shepherd stalks gigantic. Till at last
Wreath'd dun around, in deeper circles still
Successive closing, sits the general fog
Unbounded o'er the world; and, mingling thick,
A formless gray confusion covers all.
As when of old (so sung the Hebrew Bard)
Light, uncollected, through the chaos urged
Its infant way; nor Order yet had drawn
His lovely train from out the dubious gloom.

These roving mists, that constant now begin
To smoke along the hilly country, these,
With weightier rains, and melted Alpine snows,
The mountain cisterns fill, those ample stores
Of water, scoop'd among the hollow rocks;
Whence gush the streams, the ceaseless fountains play,
And their unfailing wealth the rivers draw.
Some sages say, that, where the numerous wave
For ever lashes the resounding shore,

Drill'd through the sandy stratum, every way,
The waters with the sandy stratum rise;
Amid whose angles infinitely strain'd,
They joyful leave their jaggy salts behind,
And clear and sweeten as they soak along.
Nor stops the restless fluid, mounting still,
Though oft amidst the irriguous vale it springs;
But to the mountain courted by the sand,
That leads it darkling on in faithful maze,
Far from the parent-main, it boils again
Fresh into day; and all the glittering hill
Is bright with spouting rills. But hence this vain
Amusive dream! why should the waters love
To take so far a journey to the hills,
When the sweet valleys offer to their toil
Inviting quiet, and a nearer bed?
Or if by blind ambition led astray,
They must aspire; why should they sudden stop
Among the broken mountain's rushy dells,
And, ere they gain its highest peak, desert
The attractive sand that charm'd their course so long?
Besides, the hard agglomerating salts,
The spoil of ages, would impervious choke
Their secret channels; or, by slow degrees,
High as the hills protrude the swelling vales:
Old Ocean too, suck'd through the porous globe,
Had long ere now forsook his horrid bed,
And brought Deucalion's watery times again.

Say then, where lurk the vast eternal springs,
That, like creating nature, lie conceal'd
From mortal eye, yet with their lavish stores
Refresh the globe, and all its joyous tribes!
O thou pervading Genius, given to man,
To trace the secrets of the dark abyss,
O lay the mountains bare! and wide display
Their hidden structure to the astonish'd view!
Strip from the branching Alps their piny load;
The huge incumbrance of horrific woods
From Asian Taurus, from Imaus stretch'd
Athwart the roving Tartar's sullen bounds;
Give opening Hemus to my searching eye,
And high Olympus pouring many a stream!
O from the sounding summits of the north,
The Dofrine hills, through Scandinavia roll'd
To farthest Lapland and the frozen main;
From lofty Caucasus, far seen by those
Who in the Caspian and black Euxine toil;
From cold Riphean rocks, which the wild Russ
Believes the stony girdle* of the world:
And all the dreadful mountains, wrapp'd in storm,
Whence wide Siberia draws her lonely floods;
O sweep the eternal snows! hung o'er the deep,
That ever works beneath his sounding base,
Bid Atlas, propping heaven, as poets feign,
His subterranean wonders spread! unveil
The miny caverns, blazing on the day,
Of Abyssinia's cloud compelling cliffs,
And of the bending Mountains* of the Moon!
O'ertopping all these giant sons of earth,
Let the dire Andes, from the radiant line
Stretch'd to the stormy seas that thunder round
The southern pole, their hideous deeps unfold!

Amazing scene! Behold! the glooms disclose;
I see the rivers in their infant beds!
Deep, deep I hear them labouring to get free;
I see the leaning strata, artful ranged;
The gaping fissures to receive the rains,
The melting snows, and ever-dripping fogs.
Strow'd bibulous above I see the sands,
The pebbly gravel next, the layers then
Of mingled moulds, of more retentive earths
The gutter'd rocks and mazy-running clefts;
That, while the stealing moisture they transmit,
Retard its motion, and forbid its waste.
Beneath the incessant weeping of these drains,
I see the rocky siphons stretch'd immense,
The mighty reservoirs of harden'd chalk,
Or stiff compacted clay, capacious form'd:
O'erflowing thence, the congregated stores,
The crystal treasures of the liquid world,
Through the stirr'd sands a bubbling passage burst;
And welling out, around the middle steep,
Or from the bottoms of the bosom'd hills,
In pure effusion flow. United, thus,
The exhaling sun, the vapour-burden'd air,
The gelid mountains, that to rain condensed
These vapours in continual current draw,
And send them o'er the fair-divided earth,
In bounteous rivers to the deep again,
A social commerce hold, and firm support
The full-adjusted harmony of things.

When Autumn scatters his departing gleams,
Warn'd of approaching Winter, gather'd, play
The swallow-people; and toss'd wide around,
O'er the calm sky, in convolution swift,
The feather'd eddy floats: rejoicing once,
Ere to their wintry slumbers they retire;
In clusters clung, beneath the mouldering bank,
And where, unpierced by frost, the cavern sweats,
Or rather into warmer climes convey'd,
With other kindred birds of season, there
They twitter cheerful, till the vernal months
Invite them welcome back: for, thronging, now
Innumerous wings are in commotion all.

Where the Rhine loses his majestic force
In Belgian plains, won from the raging deep
By diligence amazing, and the strong
Unconquerable hand of Liberty,
The stork-assembly meets; for many a day,
Consulting deep, and various, ere they take

The Moscovites call the Riphean Mountains *Weliki Camenypoys*, that is, *the great stony Girdle;* because they suppose them to encompass the whole earth.

* A range of mountains in Africa that surround all Monomotapa.

Their arduous voyage through the liquid sky:
And now their route design'd, their leaders chose,
Their tribes adjusted, clean'd their vigorous wings;
And many a circle, many a short essay,
Wheel'd round and round, in congregation full
The figured flight ascends; and, riding high
The aërial billows, mixes with the clouds.
Or where the Northern ocean, in vast whirls,
Boils round the naked melancholy isles
Of farthest Thule, and the Atlantic surge
Pours in among the stormy Hebrides;
Who can recount what transmigrations there
Are annual made? what nations come and go?
And how the living clouds on clouds arise?
Infinite wings! till all the plume-dark air,
And rude resounding shore are one wild cry.
Here the plain harmless native his small flock,
And herd diminutive of many hues,
Tends on the little island's verdant swell,
The shepherd's sea-girt reign; or, to the rocks
Dire-clinging, gathers his ovarious food;
Or sweeps the fishy shore! or treasures up
The plumage, rising full, to form the bed
Of luxury. And here awhile the Muse,
High hovering o'er the broad cerulean scene,
Sees Caledonia, in romantic view:
Her airy mountains, from the waving main,
Invested with a keen diffusive sky,
Breathing the soul acute: her forests huge,
Incult, robust, and tall, by Nature's hand
Planted of old; her azure lakes between,
Pour'd out extensive, and of watery wealth
Full; winding deep, and green, her fertile vales;
With many a cool translucent brimming flood
Wash'd lovely, from the Tweed (pure parent stream,
Whose pastoral banks first heard my Doric reed,
With, sylvan Jed, thy tributary brook)
To where the north-inflated tempest foams
O'er Orca's or Betubiam's highest peak:
Nurse of a people, in Misfortune's school
Train'd up to hardy deeds; soon visited
By Learning, when before the gothic rage
She took her western flight. A manly race,
Of unsubmitting spirit, wise, and brave;
Who still through bleeding ages struggled hard,
(As well unhappy Wallace can attest,
Great patriot hero! ill requited chief!)
To hold a generous, undiminish'd state;
Too much in vain! Hence of unequal bounds
Impatient, and by tempting glory borne
O'er every land, for every land their life
Has flow'd profuse, their piercing genius plann'd,
And swell'd the pomp of peace their faithful toil.
As from their own clear north, in radiant streams,
Bright over Europe bursts the boreal morn.
Oh! is there not some patriot, in whose power
That best, that godlike luxury is placed,
Of blessing thousands, thousands yet unborn,
Through late posterity? some, large of soul,
To cheer dejected industry? to give
A double harvest to the pining swain?
And teach the labouring hand the sweets of toil?
How, by the finest art, the native robe
To weave; how white as hyperborean snow,
To form the lucid lawn; with venturous oar
How to dash wide the billow; nor look on,
Shamefully passive while Batavian fleets
Defraud us of the glittering finny swarms,
That heave our friths, and crowd upon our shores;
How all enlivening trade to rouse, and wing
The prosperous sail, from every growing port,
Uninjured, round the sea-encircled globe;
And thus, in soul united as in name,
Bid Britain reign the mistress of the deep?
Yes, there are such. And full on thee, Argyle,
Her hope, her stay, her darling, and her boast,
From her first patriots and her heroes sprung,
Thy fond imploring country turns her eye;
In thee with all a mother's triumph, sees
Her every virtue, every grace, combined,
Her genius, wisdom, her engaging turn,
Her pride of honour, and her courage tried,
Calm and intrepid, in the very throat
Of sulphurous war, on Tenier's dreadful field.
Nor less the palm of peace, inwreathes thy brow:
For, powerful as thy sword, from thy rich tongue
Persuasion flows, and wins the high debate;
While mix'd in thee combine the charm of youth,
The force of manhood, and the depth of age.
Thee, Forbes, too, whom every worth attends,
As truth sincere, as weeping friendship kind,
Thee, truly generous, and in silence great,
Thy country feels through her reviving arts,
Plann'd by thy wisdom, by thy soul inform'd;
And seldom has she known a friend like thee.
But see the fading many-colour'd woods,
Shade deepening over shade, the country round
Imbrown; a crowded umbrage, dusk, and dun,
Of every hue, from wan declining green
To sooty dark. These now the lonesome Muse,
Low whispering, lead into their leaf-strown walks,
And give the Season in its latest view.
Meantime, light shadowing all, a sober calm
Fleeces unbounded ether: whose least wave
Stands tremulous, uncertain where to turn
The gentle current; while illumined wide,
The dewy-skirted clouds imbibe the sun,
And through their lucid veil his soften'd force
Shed o'er the peaceful world. Then is the time,
For those whom Wisdom and whom Nature charm,
To steal themselves from the degenerate crowd,
And soar above this little scene of things:
To tread low-thoughted Vice beneath their feet:
To sooth the throbbing passions into peace:
And woo lone Quiet in her silent walks.

Thus solitary, and in pensive guise,
Oft let me wander o'er the russet mead,
And through the sadden'd grove, where scarce is heard
One dying strain, to cheer the woodman's toil.
Haply some widow'd songster pours his plaint,
Far, in faint warblings, through the tawny copse:
While congregated thrushes, linnets, larks,
And each wild throat, whose artless strains so late
Swell'd all the music of the swarming shades,
Robb'd of their tuneful souls, now shivering sit
On the dead tree, a dull despondent flock;
With not a brightness waving o'er their plumes,
And nought save chattering discord in their note.
O let not, aim'd from some inhuman eye,
The gun the music of the coming year
Destroy; and harmless, unsuspecting harm,
Lay the weak tribes a miserable prey,
In mingled murder, fluttering on the ground!

The pale-descending year, yet pleasing still,
A gentler mood inspires; for now the leaf
Incessant rustles from the mournful grove;
Oft startling such as, studious, walk below,
And slowly circles through the waving air.
But should a quicker breeze amid the boughs
Sob, o'er the sky the leafy deluge streams;
Till choked, and matted with the dreary shower,
The forest walks, at every rising gale,
Roll wide the wither'd waste, and whistle bleak.
Fled is the blasted verdure of the fields;
And, shrunk into their beds, the flowery race
Their sunny robes resign. E'en what remain'd
Of stronger fruits falls from the naked tree;
And woods, fields, gardens, orchards, all around
The desolated prospect thrills the soul.

He comes! he comes! in every breeze the Power
Of Philosophic Melancholy comes!
His near approach the sudden starting tear,
The glowing cheek, the mild dejected air,
The soften'd feature, and the beating heart,
Pierced deep with many a virtuous pang, declare.
O'er all the soul his sacred influence breathes!
Inflames imagination; through the breast
Infuses every tenderness; and far
Beyond dim earth exalts the swelling thought.
Ten thousand thousand fleet ideas, such
As never mingled with the vulgar dream,
Crowd fast into the mind's creative eye.
As fast the correspondent passions rise,
As varied, and as high: Devotion raised
To rapture, and divine astonishment;
The love of Nature unconfined, and, chief,
Of human race; the large ambitious wish,
To make them blest; the sigh for suffering worth
Lost in obscurity; the noble scorn
Of tyrant pride; the fearless great resolve;
The wonder which the dying patriot draws,
Inspiring glory through remotest time;
The awaken'd throb for virtue, and for fame;
The sympathies of love, and friendship dear;
With all the social offspring of the heart.

Oh! bear me then to vast embowering shades,
To twilight groves, and visionary vales;
To weeping grottos, and prophetic glooms;
Where angel forms athwart the solemn dusk,
Tremendous sweep, or seem to sweep along;
And voices more than human, through the void
Deep sounding, seize the enthusiastic ear!

Or is this gloom too much? Then lead, ye powers,
That o'er the garden and the rural seat
Preside, which shining through the cheerful hand
In countless numbers blest Britannia sees;
O lead me to the wide extended walks,
The fair majestic paradise of Stowe!*
Not Persian Cyrus on Ionia's shore
E'er saw such sylvan scenes; such various art
By genius fired, such ardent genius tamed
By cool judicious art; that, in the strife,
All beauteous Nature fears to be outdone.
And there, O Pitt, thy country's early boast,
There let me sit beneath the shelter'd slopes,
Or in that Temple† where, in future times,
Thou well shalt merit a distinguish'd name;
And, with thy converse blest, catch the last smiles
Of Autumn beaming o'er the yellow woods.
While there with thee the enchanted round I walk,
The regulated wild, gay Fancy then
Will tread in thought the groves of attic land,
Will from thy standard taste refine her own,
Correct her pencil to the purest truth
Of Nature, or, the unimpassion'd shades
Forsaking, raise it to the human mind.
Or if hereafter she, with juster hand,
Shall draw the tragic scene, instruct her thou,
To mark the varied movements of the heart,
What every decent character requires,
And every passion speaks: O through her strain
Breathe thy pathetic eloquence! that moulds
The attentive senate, charms, persuades, exalts,
Of honest Zeal the indignant lightning throws,
And shakes Corruption on her venal throne.
While thus we talk, and through Elysian vales
Delighted rove, perhaps a sigh escapes:
What pity, Cobham, thou thy verdant files
Of order'd trees shouldst here inglorious range,
Instead of squadrons flaming o'er the field,
And long embattled hosts! when the proud foe,
The faithless vain disturber of mankind,
Insulting Gaul, has roused the world to war;
When keen, once more, within their bounds to press
Those polish'd robbers, those ambitious slaves,
The British youth would hail thy wise command,
Thy temper'd ardour, and thy veteran skill.

* The seat of Lord Cobham.
† The Temple of Virtue in Stowe Gardens

The western sun withdraws the shorten'd day;
And humid Evening, gliding o'er the sky,
In her chill progress, to the ground condensed
The vapours throws. Where creeping waters ooze,
Where marshes stagnate, and where rivers wind
Cluster the rolling fogs, and swim along
The dusky-mantled lawn. Meanwhile the Moon
Full-orb'd, and breaking through the scatter'd clouds,
Shows her broad visage in the crimson'd east.
Turn'd to the sun direct, her spotted disk,
Where mountains rise, umbrageous dales descend,
And caverns deep, as optic tube descries,
A smaller earth, gives us his blaze again,
Void of its flame, and sheds a softer day.
Now through the passing cloud she seems to stoop,
Now up the pure cerulean rides sublime.
Wide the pale deluge floats, and streaming mild
O'er the sky'd mountain to the shadowy vale,
While rocks and floods reflect the quivering gleam,
The whole air whitens with a boundless tide
Of silver radiance trembling round the world.

But when half blotted from the sky her light,
Fainting, permits the starry fires to burn
With keener lustre through the depth of heaven;
Or near extinct her deaden'd orb appears,
And scarce appears, of sickly beamless white;
Oft in this season, silent from the north
A blaze of meteors shoots; ensweeping first
The lower skies, they all at once converge
High to the crown of heaven, and all at once
Relapsing quick, as quickly reascend,
And mix, and thwart, extinguish, and renew,
All ether coursing in a maze of light.

From look to look, contagious through the crowd,
The panic runs, and into wondrous shapes
The appearance throws: armies in meet array,
Throng'd with aërial spears, and steeds of fire;
Till the long lines of full extended war
In bleeding fight commix'd, the sanguine flood
Rolls a broad slaughter o'er the plains of heaven.
As thus they scan the visionary scene,
On all sides swells the superstitious din,
Incontinent; and busy frenzy talks
Of blood and battle; cities overturn'd,
And late at night in swallowing earthquake sunk,
Or hideous wrapt in fierce ascending flame;
Of sallow famine, inundation, storm;
Of pestilence, and every great distress;
Empires subversed, when ruling fate has struck
The unalterable hour: e'en Nature's self
Is deem'd to totter on the brink of time.
Not so the man of philosophic eye,
And inspect sage; the waving brightness he
Curious surveys, inquisitive to know
The causes, and materials, yet unfix'd,
Of this appearance beautiful and new.

Now black, and deep, the night begins to fall,
A shade immense! Sunk in the quenching gloom,
Magnificent and vast, are heaven and earth.
Order confounded lies; all beauty void;
Distinction lost; and gay variety
One universal blot; such the fair power
Of light, to kindle and create the whole.
Drear is the state of the benighted wretch,
Who then, bewilder'd, wanders through the dark,
Full of pale fancies, and chimeras huge;
Nor visited by one directive ray,
From cottage streaming, or from airy hall.
Perhaps impatient as he stumbles on,
Struck from the root of slimy rushes, blue,
The wildfire scatters round, or gather'd trails
A length of flame deceitful o'er the moss:
Whither decoy'd by the fantastic blaze,
Now lost and now renew'd, he sinks absorb'd,
Rider and horse, amid the miry gulf:
While still, from day to day, his pining wife
And plaintive children his return await,
In wild conjecture lost. At other times,
Sent by the better Genius of the night,
Innoxious, gleaming on the horse's mane,
The meteor sits; and shows the narrow path,
That winding leads through pits of death, or else
Instructs him how to take the dangerous ford.

The lengthen'd night elapsed, the Morning shines
Serene, in all her dewy beauty bright,
Unfolding fair the last autumnal day.
And now the mounting sun dispels the fog;
The rigid hoar frost melts before his beam;
And hung on every spray, on every blade
Of grass, the myriad dew-drops twinkle round.

Ah, see where, robb'd and murder'd, in that pit
Lies the still heaving hive! at evening snatch'd,
Beneath the cloud of guilt-concealing night,
And fix'd o'er sulphur: while, not dreaming ill,
The happy people, in their waxen cells,
Sat tending public cares, and planning schemes
Of temperance, for Winter poor; rejoiced
To mark, full flowing round, their copious stores.
Sudden the dark oppressive steam ascends;
And, used to milder scents, the tender race,
By thousands, tumble from their honey'd domes,
Convolved, and agonizing in the dust.
And was it then for this you roam'd the Spring,
Intent from flower to flower? for this you toil'd
Ceaseless the burning Summer heats away?
For this in Autumn search'd the blooming waste,
Nor lost one sunny gleam? for this sad fate?
O Man! tyrannic lord! how long, how long
Shall prostrate Nature groan beneath your rage,
Awaiting renovation? when obliged,
Must you destroy? of their ambrosial food
Can you not borrow; and, in just return,
Afford them shelter from the wintry winds;
Or, as the sharp year pinches, with their own
Again regale them on some smiling day?
See where the stony bottom of their town
Looks desolate, and wild; with here and there

A helpless number, who the ruin'd state
Survive, lamenting weak, cast out to death.
Thus a proud city, populous and rich,
Full of the works of peace, and high in joy,
At theatre or feast, or sunk in sleep,
(As late, Palermo, was thy fate) is seized
By some dread earthquake, and convulsive hurl'd
Sheer from the black foundation, stench-involved,
Into a gulf of blue sulphureous flame.

Hence every harsher sight! for now the day,
O'er heaven and earth diffused, grows warm, and high;
Infinite splendour! wide investing all.
How still the breeze! save what the filmy thread
Of dew evaporate brushes from the plain.
How clear the cloudless sky? how deeply tinged
With a peculiar blue! the ethereal arch
How swell'd immense! amid whose azure throned
The radiant sun how gay! how calm below
The gilded earth! the harvest-treasures all
Now gather'd in, beyond the rage of storms,
Sure to the swain; the circling fence shut up;
And instant Winter's utmost rage defied.
While, loose to festive joy, the country round
Laughs with the loud sincerity of mirth,
Shook to the wind their cares. The toil-strung youth
By the quick sense of music taught alone,
Leaps wildly graceful in the lively dance.
Her every charm abroad, the village-toast,
Young, buxom, warm, in native beauty rich,
Darts not unmeaning looks; and, where her eye
Points an approving smile, with double force,
The cudgel rattles, and the wrestler twines.
Age too shines out; and, garrulous, recounts
The feats of youth. Thus they rejoice; nor think
That, with to-morrow's sun, their annual toil
Begins again the never ceasing round.

Oh, knew he but his happiness, of men
The happiest he! who far from public rage,
Deep in the vale, with a choice few retired,
Drinks the pure pleasures of the Rural Life.
What though the dome be wanting, whose proud gate,
Each morning, vomits out the sneaking crowd
Of flatterers false, and in their turn abused?
Vile intercourse! what though the glittering robe
Of every hue reflected light can give,
Or floating loose, or stiff with mazy gold,
The pride and gaze of fools! oppress him not?
What though, from utmost land and sea purvey'd,
For him each rarer tributary life
Bleeds not, and his insatiate table heaps
With luxury, and death? What though his bowl
Flames not with costly juice; nor sunk in beds,
Oft of gay care, he tosses out the night,
Or melts the thoughtless hours in idle state?
What though he knows not those fantastic joys
That still amuse the wanton, still deceive!
A face of pleasure, but a heart of pain;
Their hollow moments undelighted all?
Sure peace is his; a solid life, estranged
To disappointment, and fallacious hope:
Rich in content, in Nature's bounty rich,
In herbs and fruits whatever greens the Spring,
When heaven descends in showers or bends the bough,
When Summer reddens, and when Autumn beams;
Or in the wintry glebe whatever lies
Conceal'd, and fattens with the richest sap:
These are not wanting; nor the milky drove,
Luxuriant, spread o'er all the lowing vale;
Nor bleating mountains; nor the chide of streams,
And hum of bees, inviting sleep sincere
Into the guiltless breast, beneath the shade,
Or thrown at large amid the fragrant hay;
Nor aught besides of prospect, grove, or song,
Dim grottos, gleaming lakes, and fountain clear.
Here too dwells simple Truth; plain Innocence
Unsullied Beauty; sound unbroken Youth,
Patient of labour, with a little pleased;
Truth ever blooming; unambitious Toil;
Calm Contemplation, and poetic Ease.

Let others brave the flood in quest of gain,
And beat, for joyless months, the gloomy wave.
Let such as deem it glory to destroy
Rush into blood, the sack of cities seek;
Unpierced, exulting in the widow's wail,
The virgin's shriek, and infant's trembling cry.
Let some, far distant from their native soil,
Urged or by want or harden'd avarice,
Find other lands beneath another sun.
Let this through cities work his eager way
By legal outrage and establish'd guile,
The social sense extinct; and that ferment
Mad into tumult the seditious herd,
Or melt them down to slavery. Let these
Insnare the wretched in the toils of law,
Fomenting discord, and perplexing right
An iron race! and those of fairer front,
But equal inhumanity, in courts,
Delusive pomp and dark cabals, delight;
Wreathe the deep bow, diffuse the lying smile,
And tread the weary labyrinth of state.
While he, from all the stormy passions free
That restless men involve, hears, and but hears,
At distance safe, the human tempest roar,
Wrapp'd close in conscious peace. The fall of kings,
The rage of nations, and the crush of states,
Move not the man, who, from the world escaped,
In still retreats and flowery solitudes,
To Nature's voice attends, from month to month,
And day to day, through the revolving year;
Admiring, sees her in her every shape;
Feels all her sweet emotions at his heart;
Takes what she liberal gives, nor thinks of more.
He, when young Spring protrudes the bursting germs,

Marks the first bud, and sucks the healthful gale
Into his freshen'd soul; her genial hours
He full enjoys; and not a beauty blows,
And not an opening blossom breathes in vain.
In Summer he, beneath the living shade,
Such as o'er frigid Tempè wont to wave,
Or Hemus cool, reads what the Muse, of these,
Perhaps, has in immortal numbers sung;
Or what she dictates writes: and, oft an eye
Shot round, rejoices in the vigorous year.

When Autumn's yellow lustre gilds the world,
And tempts the sickléd swain into the field,
Seized by the general joy, his heart distends
With gentle throes; and, through the tepid gleams
Deep musing, then he best exerts his song.
E'en Winter wild to him is full of bliss.
The mighty tempest, and the hoary waste,
Abrupt and deep, stretch'd o'er the buried earth,
Awake to solemn thought. At night the skies.
Disclosed, and kindled, by refining frost,
Pour every lustre on the exalted eye.
A friend, a book, the stealing hours secure,
And mark them down for wisdom. With swift wing
O'er land and sea imagination roams;
Or truth, divinely breaking on his mind,
Elates his being, and unfolds his powers;
Or in his breast heroic virtue burns.
The touch of kindred too and love he feels;
The modest eye, whose beams on his alone
Ecstatic shine; the little strong embrace
Of prattling children, twined around his neck,
And emulous to please him, calling forth
The fond parental soul. Nor purpose gay,
Amusement, dance, or song, he sternly scorns;
For happiness and true philosophy
Are of the social, still, and smiling kind.
This is the life which those who fret in guilt,
And guilty cities, never knew; the life,
Led by primeval ages, uncorrupt,
When Angels dwelt, and God himself, with Man!

Oh Nature! all-sufficient! over all!
Enrich me with the knowledge of thy works!
Snatch me to Heaven; thy rolling wonders there,
World beyond world, in infinite extent,
Profusely scatter'd o'er the blue immense,
Show me; their motions, periods, and their laws
Give me to scan; through the disclosing deep
Light my blind way: the mineral strata there;
Thrust, blooming, thence the vegetable world;
O'er that the rising system, more complex,
Of animals; and higher still, the mind,
The varied scene of quick-compounded thought,
And where the mixing passions endless shift;
These ever open to my ravish'd eye;
A search, the flight of time can ne'er exhaust!
But if to that unequal; if the blood,
In sluggish streams about my heart, forbid
That best ambition; under closing shades,
Inglorious, lay me by the lowly brook,
And whisper to my dreams. From Thee begin,
Dwell all on Thee, with Thee conclude my song;
And let me never, never stray from Thee!

Winter.

Horrida cano
Bruma gelu.

ARGUMENT.

The subject proposed. Address to the Earl of Wilmington. First approach of Winter. According to the natural course of the Season, various Storms described. Rain. Wind. Snow. The driving of the Snows: a Man perishing among them; whence reflections on the Wants and Miseries of Human Life. The Wolves descending from the Alps and Appenines. A Winter Evening described; as spent by Philosophers; by the Country People; in the City. Frost. A view of Winter within the Polar Circle. A Thaw. The whole concluding with moral reflections on a Future State.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

SIR SPENCER COMPTON.

Sir,

The Author of the following Poem begs leave to inscribe this, his first performance, to your name and patronage: unknown himself, and only introduced by the Muse, he yet ventures to approach you, with a modest cheerfulness: for, whoever attempts to excel in any generous art, though he comes alone, and unregarded by the world, may hope for your notice and esteem. Happy if I can, in any degree, merit this good fortune: as every ornament and grace of polite learning is yours, your single approbation will be my fame.

I dare not indulge my heart by dwelling on your public character; on that exalted honour and integrity which distinguish you in that august assembly where you preside, that unshaken loyalty to your sovereign, that disinterested concern for his people which shine out, united, in all your be-

haviour, and finish the patriot. I am conscious of my want of strength and skill for so delicate an undertaking; and yet, as the shepherd in his cottage may feel and acknowledge the influence of the sun with as lively a gratitude as the great man in his palace, even I may be allowed to publish my sense of those blessings which, from so many powerful virtues, are derived to the nation they adorn.

I conclude with saying that your fine discernment and humanity, in your private capacity, are so conspicuous that, if this address is not received with some indulgence, it will be a severe conviction that what I have written has not the least share of merit.

I am,
With the profoundest respect,
SIR,
Your most devoted and most faithful
humble Servant,
JAMES THOMSON.

WINTER.

SEE, Winter comes, to rule the varied year,
Sullen and sad, with all his rising train;
Vapours, and clouds, and storms. Be these my theme,
These! that exalt the soul to solemn thought,
And heavenly musing. Welcome, kindred glooms,
Congenial horrors, hail! with frequent foot,
Pleased have I, in my cheerful morn of life,
When nursed by careless Solitude I lived,
And sung of Nature with unceasing joy,
Pleased have I wander'd through your rough domain;
Trod the pure virgin-snows, myself as pure;
Heard the winds roar, and the big torrent burst;
Or seen the deep-fermenting tempest brew'd,
In the grim evening sky. Thus pass'd the time,
Till through the lucid chambers of the south
Look'd out the joyous Spring, look'd out, and smiled.

To thee, the patron of her first essay,
The Muse, O Wilmington! renews her song.
Since has she rounded the revolving year:
Skimm'd the gay Spring; on eagle-pinions borne,
Attempted through the Summer-blaze to rise;
Then swept o'er Autumn with the shadowy gale;
And now among the wintry clouds again,
Roll'd in the doubling storm she tries to soar;
To swell her note with all the rushing winds;
To suit her sounding cadence to the floods;
As is her theme, her numbers wildly great:
Thrice happy could she fill thy judging ear
With bold description, and with manly thought.
Nor art thou skill'd in awful schemes alone,
And how to make a mighty people thrive;
But equal goodness, sound integrity,
A firm, unshaken, uncorrupted soul,
Amid a sliding age, and burning strong,
Not vainly blazing for thy country's weal,
A steady spirit regularly free;
These, each exalting each, the statesman light
Into the patriot; these, the public hope
And eye to thee converting, bid the Muse
Record what envy dares not flattery call.

Now when the cheerless empire of the sky
To Capricorn the Centaur Archer yields
And fierce Aquarius stains the inverted year;
Hung o'er the farthest verge of Heaven, the sun
Scarce spreads through ether the dejected day.
Faint are his gleams, and ineffectual shoot
His struggling rays, in horizontal lines,
Through the thick air; as clothed in cloudy storm,
Weak, wan, and broad, he skirts the southern sky;
And, soon-descending, to the long dark night,
Wide-shading all, the prostrate world resigns.
Nor is the night unwish'd; while vital heat,
Light, life, and joy, the dubious day forsake.
Meantime, in sable cincture, shadows vast,
Deep-tinged and damp, and congregated clouds,
And all the vapoury turbulence of Heaven,
Involve the face of things. Thus Winter falls,
A heavy gloom oppressive o'er the world,
Through Nature shedding influence malign,
And rouses up the seeds of dark disease,
The soul of man dies in him, loathing life,
And black with more than melancholy views.
The cattle droop; and o'er the furrow'd land,
Fresh from the plough, the dun discolour'd flocks,
Untended spreading, crop the wholesome root.
Along the woods, along the moorish fens,
Sighs the sad Genius of the coming storm;
And up among the loose disjointed cliffs,
And fractured mountains wild, the brawling brook
And cave, presageful, send a hollow moan,
Resounding long in listenign Fancy's ear.

Then comes the father of the tempest forth,
Wrapt in black glooms. First joyless rains obscure,
Drive through the mingling skies with vapour foul,
Dash on the mountain's brow, and shake the woods,
That grumbling wave below. The unsightly plain
Lies a brown deluge; as the low-bent clouds
Pour flood on flood, yet unexhausted still
Combine, and deepening into night, shut up
The day's fair face. The wanderers of Heaven,
Each to his home, retire; save those that love
To take their pastime in the troubled air,
Or skimming flutter round the dimply pool.
The cattle from the untasted fields return,
And ask, with meaning low, their wonted stalls,
Or ruminate in the contiguous shade.
Thither the household feathery people crowd,
The crested cock, with all his female train,
Pensive, and dripping; while the cottage-hind
Hangs o'er the enlivening blaze, and taleful there
Recounts his simple frolic: much he talks,

And much he laughs, nor recks the storm that blows
Without, and rattles on his humble roof.
Wide o'er the brim, with many a torrent swell'd,
And the mix'd ruin of its banks o'erspread,
At last the roused-up river pours along:
Resistless, roaring, dreadful, down it comes,
From the rude mountain, and the mossy wild,
Tumbling through rocks abrupt, and sounding far;
Then o'er the sanded valley floating spreads,
Calm, sluggish, silent; till again, constrain'd
Between two meeting hills, it bursts away,
Where rocks and woods o'erhang the turbid stream;
There gathering triple force, rapid, and deep,
It boils, and wheels, and foams, and thunders through.

Nature! great parent! whose unceasing hand
Rolls round the seasons of the changeful year,
How mighty, how majestic, are thy works!
With what a pleasing dread they swell the soul!
That sees astonish'd! and astonish'd sings!
Ye too, ye winds! that now begin to blow
With boisterous sweep, I raise my voice to you.
Where are your stores, ye powerful beings! say,
Where your aërial magazines reserved,
To swell the brooding terrors of the storm?
In what far distant region of the sky,
Hush'd in deep silence, sleep ye when 'tis calm?

When from the pallid sky the sun descends,
With many a spot, that o'er his glaring orb
Uncertain wanders, stain'd; red fiery streaks
Begin to flush around. The reeling clouds
Stagger with dizzy poise, as doubting yet
Which master to obey: while rising slow,
Blank, in the leaden-colour'd east, the moon
Wears a wan circle round her blunted horns.
Seen through the turbid fluctuating air,
The stars obtuse emit a shiver'd ray;
Or frequent seem to shoot athwart the gloom,
And long behind them trail the whitening blaze.
Snatch'd in short eddies, plays the wither'd leaf;
And on the flood the dancing feather floats.
With broaden'd nostrils to the sky upturn'd,
The conscious heifer snuffs the stormy gale.
E'en as the matron, at her nightly task,
With pensive labour draws the flaxen thread,
The wasted taper and the crackling flame
Foretell the blast. But chief the plumy race,
The tenants of the sky, its changes speak.
Retiring from the downs, where all day long
They pick'd their scanty fare, a blackening train,
Of clamorous rooks thick urge their weary flight
And seek the closing shelter of the grove;
Assiduous, in his bower, the wailing owl
Plies his sad song. The cormorant on high
Wheels from the deep, and screams along the land.
Loud shrieks the soaring hern; and with wild wing
The circling seafowl cleave the flaky clouds.
Ocean, unequal press'd, with broken tide
And blind commotion heaves; while from the shore,
Eat into caverns by the restless wave,
And forest-rustling mountain, comes a voice,
That solemn sounding bids the world prepare.
Then issues forth the storm with sudden burst,
And hurls the whole precipitated air
Down in a torrent. On the passive main
Descends the ethereal force, and with strong gust
Turns from its bottom the discolour'd deep.
Through the black night that sits immense around,
Lash'd into foam, the fierce conflicting brine
Seems o'er a thousand raging waves to burn:
Meantime the mountain-billows, to the clouds
In dreadful tumult swell'd, surge above surge,
Burst into chaos with tremendous roar,
And anchor'd navies from their stations drive,
Wild as the winds across the howling waste
Of mighty waters: now the inflated wave
Straining they scale, and now impetuous shoot
Into the secret chambers of the deep,
The wintry Baltic thundering o'er their head.
Emerging thence again, before the breath
Of full exerted Heaven they wing their course,
And dart on distant coasts; if some sharp rock,
Or shoal insidious break not their career,
And in loose fragments fling them floating round.

Nor less at hand the loosen'd tempest reigns.
The mountain thunders; and its sturdy sons
Stoop to the bottom of the rocks they shade.
Lone on the midnight steep, and all aghast,
The dark wayfaring stranger breathless toils,
And, often falling, climbs against the blast.
Low waves the rooted forest, vex'd, and sheds
What of its tarnish'd honours yet remain;
Dash'd down, and scatter'd, by the tearing wind's
Assiduous fury, its gigantic limbs.
Thus struggling through the dissipated grove,
The whirling tempest raves along the plain;
And on the cottage thatch'd, or lordly roof,
Keen-fastening, shakes them to the solid base.
Sleep frighted flies; and round the rocking dome,
For entrance eager, howls the savage blast.
Then too, they say, through all the burden'd air,
Long groans are heard, shrill sounds, and distant sighs,
That, utter'd by the Demon of the night,
Warn the devoted wretch of wo and death.
Huge uproar lords it wide. The clouds commix'd
With stars swift gliding sweep along the sky.
All Nature reels. Till Nature's King, who oft
Amid tempestuous darkness dwells alone,
And on the wings of the careering wind
Walks dreadfully serene, commands a calm;
Then straight, air, sea, and earth are hush'd at once.

As yet 'tis midnight deep. The weary clouds,
Slow meeting, mingle into solid gloom.
Now, while the drowsy world lies lost in sleep
Let me associate with the serious Night,

And Contemplation her sedate compeer;
Let me shake off the intrusive cares of day,
And lay the meddling senses all aside.
Where now, ye lying vanities of life!
Ye ever tempting ever cheating train!
Where are you now? and what is your amount?
Vexation, disappointment, and remorse:
Sad, sickening thought! and yet deluded man,
A scene of crude disjointed visions past,
And broken slumbers, rises still resolved,
With new-flush'd hopes, to run the giddy round.
Father of light and life! thou Good Supreme!
O teach me what is good! teach me Thyself!
Save me from folly, vanity, and vice,
From every low pursuit! and feed my soul
With knowledge, conscious peace, and virtue pure;
Sacred, substantial, never-fading bliss!
The keener tempests rise: and fuming dun
From all the livid east, or piercing north,
Thick clouds ascend; in whose capacious womb
A vapoury deluge lies, to snow congeal'd.
Heavy they roll their fleecy world along;
And the sky saddens with the gather'd storm.
Through the hush'd air the whitening shower descends,
At first thin wavering; till at last the flakes
Fall broad, and wide, and fast, dimming the day,
With a continual flow. The cherish'd fields
Put on their winter-robe of purest white.
'Tis brightness all; save where the new snow melts
Along the mazy current. Low the woods
Bow their hoar head; and ere the languid sun
Faint from the west emits his evening ray,
Earth's universal face, deep hid, and chill,
Is one wild dazzling waste, that buries wide
The works of man. Drooping, the labourer-ox
Stands cover'd o'er with snow, and then demands
The fruit of all his toil. The fowls of Heaven,
Tamed by the cruel season, crowd around
The winnowing store, and claim the little boon
Which Providence assigns them. One alone,
The redbreast, sacred to the household gods,
Wisely regardful of the embroiling sky,
In joyless fields and thorny thickets, leaves
His shivering mates, and pays to trusted man
His annual visit. Half afraid, he first
Against the window beats; then, brisk, alights
On the warm hearth; then, hopping o'er the floor,
Eyes all the smiling family askance,
And pecks, and starts, and wonders where he is;
Till more familiar grown, the table-crumbs
Attract his slender feet. The foodless wilds
Pour forth their brown inhabitants. The hare,
Though timorous of heart, and hard beset
By death in various forms, dark snares and dogs,
And more unpitying men, the garden seeks,
Urged on by fearless want. The bleating kind
Eye the bleak Heaven, and next the glistening earth,
With looks of dumb despair; then, sad dispersed,
Dig for the wither'd herb through heaps of snow.
Now, shepherds, to your helpless charge be kind,
Baffle the raging year, and fill their pens
With food at will; lodge them below the storm,
And watch them strict: for from the bellowing east,
In this dire season, oft the whirlwind's wing
Sweeps up the burden of whole wintry plains
At one wide waft, and o'er the hapless flocks,
Hid in the hollow of two neighbouring hills,
The billowy tempest whelms; till, upward urged,
The valley to a shining mountain swells,
Tipp'd with a wreath high-curling in the sky.
As thus the snows arise; and foul, and fierce,
All Winter drives along the darken'd air:
In his own loose revolving fields, the swain
Disaster'd stands; sees other hills ascend,
Of unknown joyless brow; and other scenes,
Of horrid prospect, shag the trackless plain:
Nor finds the river, nor the forest, hid
Beneath the formless wild; but wanders on
From hill to dale, still more and more astray;
Impatient flouncing through the drifted heaps,
Stung with the thoughts of home; the thoughts of home
Rush on his nerves, and call their vigour forth
In many a vain attempt. How sinks his soul!
What black despair, what horror fills his heart!
When for the dusky spot, which fancy feign'd
His tufted cottage rising through the snow,
He meets the roughness of the middle waste,
Far from the track and bless'd abode of man;
While round him night resistless closes fast,
And every tempest, howling o'er his head,
Renders the savage wilderness more wild.
Then throng the busy shapes into his mind,
Of cover'd pits, unfathomably deep,
A dire descent! beyond the power of frost;
Of faithless bogs; of precipices huge,
Smooth'd up with snow; and, what is land, unknown,
What water, of the still unfrozen spring,
In the loose marsh or solitary lake,
Where the fresh mountain from the bottom boils.
These check his fearful steps; and down he sinks,
Beneath the shelter of the shapeless drift,
Thinking o'er all the bitterness of death;
Mix'd with the tender anguish nature shoots
Through the wrung bosom of the dying man,
His wife, his children, and his friends unseen.
In vain for him the officious wife prepares
The fire fair-blazing, and the vestment warm;
In vain his little children, peeping out
Into the mingling storm, demand their sire,
With tears of artless innocence. Alas!

Nor wife, nor children more shall he behold,
Nor friends, nor sacred home. On every nerve
The deadly Winter seizes; shuts up sense;
And, o'er his inmost vitals creeping cold,
Lays him along the snows, a stiffen'd corse,
Stretch'd out, and bleaching in the northern blast.
Ah! little think the gay licentious proud,
Whom pleasure, power, and affluence surround;
They who their thoughtless hours in giddy mirth,
And wanton, often cruel, riot waste;
Ah! little think they, while they dance along,
How many feel, this very moment, death,
And all the sad variety of pain.
How many sink in the devouring flood,
Or more devouring flame. How many bleed,
By shameful variance betwixt man and man.
How many pine in want, and dungeon glooms;
Shut from the common air, and common use
Of their own limbs. How many drink the cup
Of baleful grief, or eat the bitter bread
Of misery. Sore pierced by wintry winds,
How many shrink into the sordid hut
Of cheerless poverty. How many shake
With all the fiercer tortures of the mind,
Unbounded passion, madness, guilt, remorse;
Whence tumbled headlong from the height of life,
They furnish matter for the tragic Muse.
E'en in the vale, where Wisdom loves to dwell,
With friendship, peace, and contemplation join'd,
How many, rack'd with honest passions, droop
In deep retired distress. How many stand
Around the deathbed of their dearest friends,
And point the parting anguish. Thought fond Man
Of these, and all the thousand nameless ills,
That one incessant struggle render life,
One scene of toil, of suffering, and of fate,
Vice in his high career would stand appall'd,
And heedless rambling Impulse learn to think;
The conscious heart of Charity would warm,
And her wide wish Benevolence dilate;
The social tear would rise, the social sigh;
And into clear perfection, gradual bliss,
Refining still, the social passions work.
And here can I forget the generous band,*
Who, touch'd with human wo, redressive search'd
Into the horrors of the gloomy jail?
Unpitied, and unheard, where misery moans;
Where sickness pines; where thirst and hunger burn,
And poor misfortune feels the lash of vice.
While in the land of Liberty, the land
Whose every street and public meeting glow
With open freedom, little tyrants raged;
Snatch'd the lean morsel from the starving mouth;
Tore from cold wintry limbs the tatter'd weed;
E'en robb'd them of the last of comforts, sleep;
The free-born Briton to the dungeon chain'd,
Or, as the lust of cruelty prevail'd,
At pleasure mark'd him with inglorious stripes;
And crush'd out lives, by secret barbarous ways,
That for their country would have toil'd or bled.
O great design! if executed well,
With patient care, and wisdom-temper'd zeal.
Ye sons of Mercy! yet resume the search;
Drag forth the legal monsters into light,
Wrench from their hands oppression's iron rod,
And bid the cruel feel the pains they give.
Much still untouch'd remains; in this rank age,
Much is the patriot's weeding hand required
The toils of law (what dark insidious men
Have cumbrous added to perplex the truth,
And lengthen simple justice into trade)
How glorious were the day! that saw these broke,
And every man within the reach of right.
By wintry famine roused, from all the tract
Of horrid mountains where the shining Alps,
And wavy Appenine, and Pyrenees,
Branch out stupendous into distant lands;
Cruel as death, and hungry as the grave!
Burning for blood! bony, and gaunt, and grim!
Assembling wolves in raging troops descend;
And, pouring o'er the country, bear along,
Keen as the north-wind sweeps the glossy snow.
All is their prize. They fasten on the steed,
Press him to earth, and pierce his mighty heart.
Nor can the bull his awful front defend.
Or shake the murdering savages away
Rapacious, at the mother's throat they fly,
And tear the screaming infant from her breast.
The godlike face of man avails him nought.
E'en beauty, force divine! at whose bright glance
The generous lion stands in soften'd gaze,
Here bleeds, a hapless undistinguish'd prey.
But if, apprized of the severe attack,
The country be shut up, lured by the scent,
On churchyards drear (inhuman to relate!)
The disappointed prowlers fall, and dig
The shrouded body from the grave; o'er which,
Mix'd with foul shades, and frighted ghosts, they howl.
Among those hilly regions, where embraced
In peaceful vales the happy Grisons dwell;
Oft, rushing sudden from the loaded cliffs,
Mountains of snow their gathering terrors roll.
From steep to steep, loud-thundering down they come,
A wintry waste in dire commotion all;
And herds, and flocks, and travellers, and swains,
And sometimes whole brigades of marching troops,
Or hamlets sleeping in the dead of night,
Are deep beneath the smothering ruin whelm'd.
Now, all amid the rigours of the year,
In the wild depth of Winter, while without
The ceaseless winds blow ice, be my retreat,
Between the groaning forest and the shore

* The jail Committee in the year 1729.

Beat by the boundless multitude of waves,
A rural, shelter'd, solitary, scene;
Where ruddy fire and beaming tapers join,
To cheer the gloom. There studious let me sit,
And hold high converse with the mighty Dead;
Sages of ancient time, as gods revered,
As gods beneficent, who bless'd mankind
With arts, with arms, and humanized a world.
Roused at the inspiring thought, I throw aside
The long-lived volume; and, deep-musing, hail
The sacred shades, that slowly rising pass
Before my wondering eyes. First Socrates,
Who, firmly good in a corrupted state,
Against the rage of tyrants single stood,
Invincible! calm Reason's holy law,
That Voice of God within the attentive mind,
Obeying, fearless, or in life, or death:
Great moral teacher! Wisest of mankind!
Solon the next, who built his common-weal
On equity's wide base; by tender laws
A lively people curbing, yet undamp'd:
Preserving still that quick peculiar fire,
Whence in the laurel'd field of finer arts
And of bold freedom, they unequal'd shone,
The pride of smiling Greece, and human-kind.
Lycurgus then, who bow'd beneath the force
Of strictest discipline, severely wise,
All human passions. Following him, I see,
As at Thermopylæ he glorious fell,
The firm devoted chief,* who proved by deeds
The hardest lesson which the other taught.
Then Aristides lifts his honest front;
Spotless of heart, to whom the unflattering voice
Of freedom gave the noblest name of Just;
In pure majestic poverty revered;
Who, e'en his glory to his country's weal
Submitting, swell'd a haughty Rival's† fame.
Rear'd by his care, of softer ray appears
Cimon sweet-soul'd; whose genius, rising strong,
Shook off the load of young debauch; abroad
The scourge of Persian pride, at home the friend
Of every worth and every splendid art;
Modest, and simple, in the pomp of wealth.
Then the last worthies of declining Greece,
Late call'd to glory, in unequal times,
Pensive appear. The fair Corinthian boast,
Timoleon, happy temper! mild, and firm,
Who wept the brother while the tyrant bled.
And, equal to the best, the Theban Pair,‡
Whose virtues, in heroic concord join'd,
Their country raised to freedom, empire, fame.
He too, with whom Athenian honour sunk,
And left a mass of sordid lees behind,
Phocion the Good; in public life severe,
To virtue still inexorably firm;
But when, beneath his low illustrious roof,

* Leonidas. † Themistocles.
‡ Pelopidas and Epaminondas.

Sweet peace and happy wisdom smooth'd his brow,
Not friendship softer was, nor love more kind.
And he, the last of old Lycurgus' sons,
The generous victim to that vain attempt,
To save a rotten state, Agis, who saw
E'en Sparta's self to servile avarice sunk,
The two Achaian heroes close the train:
Aratus, who awhile relumed the soul
Of fondly lingering liberty in Greece;
And he her darling as her latest hope,
The gallant Philopœmen; who to arms
Turn'd the luxurious pomp he could not cure;
Or toiling in his farm, a simple swain;
Or, bold and skilful, thundering in the field.
Of rougher front, a mighty people come!
A race of heroes! in those virtuous times
Which knew no stain, save that with partial flame
Their dearest country they too fondly loved:
Her better Founder first, the light of Rome
Numa, who soften'd her rapacious sons:
Servius the king, who laid the solid base
On which o'er earth the vast republic spread.
Then the great consuls venerable rise.
The public Father* who the private quell'd,
As on the dread tribunal sternly sad.
He, whom his thankless country could not lose,
Camillus, only vengeful to her foes.
Fabricius, scorner of all-conquering gold;
And Cincinnatus, awful from the plough.
Thy willing victim,† Carthage, bursting loose
From all that pleading Nature could oppose,
From a whole city's tears, by rigid faith
Imperious call'd, and honour's dire command.
Scipio, the gentle chief, humanely brave,
Who soon the race of spotless glory ran,
And, warm in youth, to the poetic shade
With Friendship and Philosophy retired.
Tully, whose powerful eloquence a while
Restrain'd the rapid fate of rushing Rome.
Unconquer'd Cato, virtuous in extreme:
And thou, unhappy Brutus, kind of heart,
Whose steady arm, by awful virtue urged,
Lifted the Roman steel against thy friend.
Thousands besides the tribute of a verse
Demand; but who can count the stars of Heaven?
Who sing their influence on this lower world?
Behold, who yonder comes! in sober state,
Fair, mild, and strong, as is a vernal sun:
'Tis Phœbus' self, or else the Mantuan Swain
Great Homer too appears, of daring wing,
Parent of song! and equal by his side,
The British Muse: join'd hand in hand they walk,
Darkling, full up the middle steep to fame,
Nor absent are those shades, whose skilful touch
Pathetic drew the impassion'd heart, and charm'd

* Marcus Junius Brutus. † Regulus

Transported Athens with the moral scene;
Nor those who, tuneful, waked the enchanting lyre.
First of your kind! society divine!
Still visit thus my nights, for you reserved,
And mount my soaring soul to thoughts like yours.
Silence, thou lonely power! the door be thine;
See on the hallow'd hour that none intrude,
Save a few chosen friends, who sometimes deign
To bless my humble roof, with sense refined,
Learning digested well, exalted faith,
Unstudied wit, and humour ever gay.
Or from the Muses' hill will Pope descend,
To raise the sacred hour, to bid it smile,
And with the social spirit warm the heart?
For though not sweeter his own Homer sings,
Yet is his life the more endearing song.
Where art thou, Hammond? thou, the darling pride,
The friend and lover of the tuneful throng!
Ah why, dear youth, in all the blooming prime
Of vernal genius, where disclosing fast
Each active worth, each manly virtue lay,
Why wert thou ravish'd from our hope so soon?
What now avails that noble thirst of fame,
Which stung thy fervent breast? that treasured store
Of knowledge early gain'd? that eager zeal
To serve thy country, glowing in the band
Of youthful patriots, who sustain her name;
What now, alas! that life-diffusing charm
Of sprightly wit? that rapture for the Muse,
That heart of friendship, and that soul of joy,
Which bade with softest light thy virtues smile?
Ah! only show'd, to check our fond pursuits,
And teach our humbled hopes that life is vain!
Thus in some deep retirement would I pass
The winter-glooms, with friends of pliant soul,
Or blithe, or solemn, as the theme inspired:
With them would search, if Nature's boundless frame
Was call'd, late-rising from the void of night,
Or sprung eternal from the Eternal Mind;
Its life, its laws, its progress, and its end.
Hence larger prospects of the beauteous whole
Would, gradual, open on our opening minds;
And each diffusive harmony unite
In full perfection, to the astonish'd eye.
Then would we try to scan the moral world,
Which, though to us it seems embroil'd, moves on
In higher order; fitted and impell'd
By Wisdom's finest hand, and issuing all
In general good. The sage historic Muse
Should next conduct us through the deeps of time:
Show us how empire grew, declined, and fell,
In scatter'd states; what makes the nations smile,
Improves their soil, and gives them double suns;
And why they pine beneath the brightest skies,
In Nature's richest lap. As thus we talk'd,
Our hearts would burn within us, would inhale
That portion of divinity, that ray
Of purest Heaven, which lights the public soul
Of patriots and of heroes. But if doom'd
In powerless humble fortune, to repress
These ardent risings of the kindling soul;
Then, even superior to ambition, we
Would learn the private virtues; how to glide
Through shades and plains, along the smoothest stream
Of rural life: or snatch'd away by hope,
Through the dim spaces of futurity,
With earnest eye anticipate those scenes
Of happiness and wonder; where the mind
In endless growth and infinite ascent,
Rises from state to state, and world to world.
But when with these the serious though is foil'd,
We, shifting for relief, would play the shapes
Of frolic fancy; and incessant form
Those rapid pictures, that assembled train
Of fleet ideas, never join'd before,
Whence lively wit excites to gay surprise;
Or folly painting humour, grave himself,
Calls laughter forth, deep-shaking every nerve.
Meantime the village rouses up the fire;
While well attested, and as well believed,
Heard solemn, goes the goblin story round;
Till superstitious horror creeps o'er all.
Or, frequent in the sounding hall, they wake
The rural gambol. Rustic mirth goes round:
The simple joke that takes the shepherd's heart
Easily pleased; the long loud laugh, sincere;
The kiss, snatch'd hasty from the side-long maid,
On purpose guardless, or pretending sleep:
The leap, the slap, the haul; and, shook to notes
Of native music, the respondent dance.
Thus jocund fleets with them the winter night.
The city swarms intense. The public haunt,
Full of each theme and warm with mix'd discourse,
Hums indistinct. The sons of riot flow
Down the loose stream of false enchanted joy,
To swift destruction. On the rankled soul
The gaming fury falls; and in one gulf
Of total ruin, honour, virtue, peace,
Friends, families, and fortune, headlong sink.
Upsprings the dance along the lighted dome,
Mix'd and evolved, a thousand sprightly ways.
The glittering court effuses every pomp;
The circle deepens: beam'd from gaudy robes,
Tapers, and sparkling gems, and radiant eyes,
A soft effulgence o'er the palace waves:
While, a gay insect in his summer-shine,
The fop, light fluttering, spreads his mealy wings.
Dread o'er the scene, the ghost of Hamlet stalks;
Othello rages; poor Monimia mourns;

And Belvidera pours her soul in love.
Terror alarms the breast; the comely tear
Steals o'er the cheek: or else the Comic Muse
Holds to the world a picture of itself,
And raises sly the fair impartial laugh.
Sometimes she lifts her strain, and paints the scenes
Of beauteous life; whate'er can deck mankind,
Or charm the heart, in generous Bevil* show'd.
O thou, whose wisdom, solid yet refined,
Whose patriot-virtues, and consummate skill
To touch the finer springs that move the world,
Join'd to whate'er the Graces can bestow,
And all Apollo's animating fire,
Give thee, with pleasing dignity, to shine
At once the guardian, ornament, and joy,
Of polish'd life; permit the rural Muse,
O Chesterfield, to grace with thee her song!
Ere to the shades again she humbly flies,
Indulge her fond ambition, in thy train,
(For every Muse has in thy train a place)
To mark thy various, full-accomplish'd mind:
To mark that spirit, which, with British scorn,
Rejects the allurements of corrupted power;
That elegant politeness, which excels,
E'en in the judgment of presumptuous France,
The boasted manners of her shining court;
That with the vivid energy of sense,
The truth of Nature, which with Attic point
And kind well temper'd satire, smoothly keen,
Steals through the soul, and without pain corrects.
Or rising thence with yet a brighter flame,
O let me hail thee on some glorious day,
When to the listening senate, ardent, crowd
Britannia's sons to hear her pleaded cause.
Then dress'd by thee, more amiably fair,
Truth the soft robe of mild persuasion wears:
Thou to assenting reason givest again
Her own enlighten'd thoughts; call'd from the heart,
The obedient passions on thy voice attend;
And e'en reluctant party feels a while
Thy gracious power: as through the varied maze
Of eloquence, now smooth, now quick, now strong,
Profound and clear, you roll the copious flood.
To thy loved haunt return, my happy Muse:
For now, behold, the joyous winter days,
Frosty, succeed; and through the blue serene,
For sight too fine, the ethereal nitre flies;
Killing infectious damps, and the spent air
Storing afresh with elemental life.
Close crowds the shining atmosphere; and binds
Our strengthen'd bodies in its cold embrace,
Constringent; feeds, and animates our blood;
Refines our spirits, through the new-strung nerves,
In swifter sallies darting to the brain;
Where sits the soul, intense, collected, cool,
Bright as the skies, and as the season keen.

All Nature feels the renovating force
Of Winter, only to the thoughtless eye
In ruin seen. The frost-concocted glebe
Draws in abundant vegetable soul,
And gathers vigour for the coming year,
A stronger glow sits on the lively cheek
Of ruddy fire: and luculent along
The purer rivers flow; their sullen deeps,
Transparent, open to the shepherd's gaze,
And murmur hoarser at the fixing frost.
What art thou, frost? and whence are thy keen stores
Derived, thou secret all-invading power,
Whom e'en the illusive fluid can not fly?
Is not thy potent energy, unseen,
Myriads of little salts, or hook'd, or shaped
Like double wedges, and diffused immense
Through water, earth, and ether? hence at eve,
Steam'd eager from the red horizon round,
With the fierce rage of Winter deep suffused,
An icy gale, oft shifting, o'er the pool
Breathes a blue film, and in its mid career
Arrests the bickering stream. The loosen'd ice,
Let down the flood, and half dissolved by day,
Rustles no more; but to the sedgy bank
Fast grows, or gathers round the pointed stone,
A crystal pavement, by the breath of Heaven
Cemented firm; till, seized from shore to shore
The whole imprison'd river growls below.
Loud rings the frozen earth, and hard reflects
A double noise; while, at his evening watch,
The village dog deters the nightly thief;
The heifer lows; the distant water-fall
Swells in the breeze; and, with the hasty tread
Of traveller, the hollow-sounding plain
Shakes from afar. The full ethereal round,
Infinite worlds disclosing to the view,
Shines out intensely keen; and, all one cope
Of starry glitter, glows from pole to pole.
From pole to pole the rigid influence falls,
Through the still night, incessant, heavy, strong,
And seizes Nature fast. It freezes on;
Till Morn, late rising o'er the drooping world,
Lifts her pale eye unjoyous. Then appears
The various labour of the silent night:
Prone from the dripping eave, and dumb cascade
Whose idle torrents only seem to roar,
The pendent icicle: the frost-work fair,
Where transient hues, and fancied figures rise;
Wide-spouted o'er the hill, the frozen brook,
A livid tract, cold-gleaming on the morn;
The forest bent beneath the plumy wave;
And by the frost refined the whiter snow,
Incrusted hard, and sounding to the tread
Of early shepherd, as he pensive seeks
His pining flock, or from the mountain top,
Pleased with the slippery surface, swift descends.
On blithsome frolics bent, the youthful swains,
While every work of man is laid at rest,

* A character in the Conscious Lovers, by Sir R. Steele.

Fond o'er the river crowd, in various sport
And revelry dissolved; where mixing glad,
Happiest of all the train, the raptured boy
Lashes the whirling top. Or, where the Rhine
Branch'd out in many a long canal extends,
From every province swarming, void of care,
Batavia rushes forth; and as they sweep,
On sounding skates, a thousand different ways,
In circling poise, swift as the winds, along,
The then gay land is madden'd all to joy.
Nor less the northern courts, wide o'er the snow,
Pour a new pomp. Eager, on rapid sleds,
Their vigorous youth in bold contention wheel
The long-resounding course. Meantime to raise
The manly strife, with highly blooming charms,
Flush'd by the season, Scandinavia's dames,
Or Russia's buxom daughters, glow around.

Pure, quick, and sportful, is the wholesome day;
But soon elapsed. The horizontal sun,
Broad o'er the south, hangs at his utmost noon:
And, ineffectual, strikes the gelid cliff:
His azure gloss the mountain still maintains,
Nor feels the feeble touch. Perhaps the vale
Relents awhile to the reflected ray:
Or from the forest falls the clustered snow,
Myriads of gems, that in the waving gleam
Gay-twinkle as they scatter. Thick around
Thunders the sport of those who with the gun,
And dog impatient bounding at the shot,
Worse than the Season, desolate the fields;
And, adding to the ruins of the year,
Distress the footed or the feathered game.

But what is this? our infant Winter sinks,
Divested of his grandeur, should our eye
Astonish'd shoot into the frigid zone;
Where, for relentless months, continual Night
Holds o'er the glittering waste her starry reign.
There, through the prison of unbounded wilds,
Barr'd by the hand of Nature from escape,
Wide roams the Russian exile. Nought around
Strikes his sad eye, but deserts lost in snow;
And heavy-loaded groves; and solid floods,
That stretch athwart the solitary waste,
Their icy horrors to the frozen main,
And cheerless towns far distant, never bless'd,
Save when its annual course the caravan
Bends to the golden coast of rich Cathay,*
With news of human-kind. Yet there life glows;
Yet cherish'd there beneath the shining waste,
The furry nations harbour: tipp'd with jet,
Fair ermines, spotless as the snows they press;
Sables of glossy black; and dark-embrown'd,
Or beauteous freak'd with many a mingled hue,
Thousands besides, the costly pride of courts.
There, warm together press'd, the trooping deer
Sleep on the new-fallen snows; and scarce his head
Raised o'er the heapy wreath, the branching elk
Lies slumbering sullen in the white abyss.
The ruthless hunter wants nor dogs nor toils,
Nor with the dread of sounding bows he drives
The fearful flying race; with ponderous clubs,
As weak against the mountain-heaps they push
Their beating breast in vain, and piteous bray,
He lays them quivering on the ensanguined snows
And with loud shouts rejoicing bears them home.
There through the piny forest half-absorp'd,
Rough tenant of these shades, the shapeless bear,
With dangling ice all horrid, stalks forlorn;
Slow-paced, and sourer as the storms increase,
He makes his bed beneath the inclement drift,
And, with stern patience, scorning weak complaint,
Hardens his heart against assailing want.

Wide o'er the spacious regions of the north,
That see Boötes urge his tardy wain,
A boisterous race, by frosty Caurus* pierced,
Who little pleasure know and fear no pain,
Prolific swarm. They once relumed the flame
Of lost mankind in polish'd slavery sunk;
Drove martial horde on horde,† with fearful sweep
Resistless rushing o'er the enfeebled south,
And gave the vanquished world another form.
Not such the sons of Lapland: wisely they
Despise the insensate barbarous trade of war;
They ask no more than simple Nature gives,
They love their mountains, and enjoy their storms,
No false desires, no pride-created wants,
Disturb the peaceful current of their time;
And through the restless ever tortured maze
Of pleasure, or ambition, bid it rage.
Their reindeer form their riches. These their tents,
Their robes, their beds, and all their homely wealth
Supply, their wholesome fare and cheerful cups.
Obsequious at their call, the docile tribe
Yield to the sled their necks, and whirl them swift
O'er hill and dale, heap'd into one expanse
Of marbled snow, as far as eye can sweep
With a blue crust of ice unbounded glazed.
By dancing meteors then, that ceaseless shake
A waving blaze refracted o'er the heavens,
And vivid moons, and stars that keener play
With doubled lustre from the glossy waste,
E'en in the depth of polar night, they find
A wondrous day: enough to light the chase,
Or guide their daring steps to Finland fairs.
Wish'd Spring returns; and from the hazy south,
While dim Aurora slowly moves before,
The welcome sun, just verging up at first,
By small degrees extends the swelling curve!
Till seen at last for gay rejoicing months,
Still round and round, his spiral course he winds,

* The old name for China.

* North-west wind. † The wandering Scythian clans.

And as he nearly dips his flaming orb,
Wheels up again, and reascends the sky.
In that glad season from the lakes and floods,
Where pure Niemi's* fairy mountains rise,
And fringed with roses Tenglio† rolls his stream,
They draw the copious fry. With these, at eve,
They cheerful loaded to their tents repair;
Where, all day long in useful cares employ'd,
Their kind unblemish'd wives the fire prepare.
Thrice happy race! by poverty secured
From legal plunder and rapacious power:
In whom fell interest never yet has sown
The seeds of vice: whose spotless swains ne'er knew
Injurious deed, nor, blasted by the breath
Of faithless love, their blooming daughters wo.
Still pressing on, beyond Tornea's lake,
And Hecla flaming through a waste of snow,
And farthest Greenland, to the pole itself,
Where, failing gradual, life at length goes out,
The Muse expands her solitary flight;
And, hovering o'er the wild stupendous scene,
Beholds new seas beneath another sky.‡
Throned in his palace of cerulean ice,
Here Winter holds his unrejoicing court;
And through the airy hall the loud misrule
Of driving tempest is for ever heard;
Here the grim tyrant meditates his wrath;
Here arms his winds with all subduing frost;
Moulds his fierce hail, and treasures up his snows,
With which he now oppresses half the globe.
Thence winding eastward to the Tartar's coast,
She sweeps the howling margin of the main;
Where undissolving, from the first of time,
Snows swell on snows, amazing to the sky;
And icy mountains high on mountains piled,
Seem to the shivering sailor from afar,
Shapeless and white, an atmosphere of clouds.
Projected huge, and horrid o'er the surge,
Alps frown on Alps; or rushing hideous down,
As if old Chaos was again return'd,
Wide-rend the deep, and shake the solid pole.
Ocean itself no longer can resist
The binding fury: but, in all its rage
Of tempest taken by the boundless frost,
Is many a fathom to the bottom chain'd,
And bid to roar no more: a bleak expanse,
Shagg'd o'er with wavy rocks, cheerless, and void
Of every life, that from the dreary months
Flies conscious southward. Miserable they!
Who, here entangled in the gathering ice,
Take their last look of the descending sun;
While, full of death, and fierce with tenfold frost,
The long long night, incumbent o'er their heads,
Falls horrible. Such was the Briton's* fate,
As with first prow, (what have not Britons dared!)
He for the passage sought, attempted since
So much in vain, and seeming to be shut
By jealous Nature with eternal bars.
In these fell regions, in Arzina caught,
And to the stony deep his idle ship
Immediate seal'd, he with his hapless crew
Each full exerted at his several task,
Froze into statues; to the cordage glued
The sailor, and the pilot to the helm.
Hard by these shores, where scarce his freezing stream
Rolls the wild Oby, live the last of men;
And half enliven'd by the distant sun,
That rears and ripens man, as well as plants,
Here human nature wears its rudest form.
Deep from the piercing season sunk in caves,
Here by dull fires, and with unjoyous cheer,
They waste the tedious gloom. Immersed in furs,
Doze the gross race. Nor sprightly jest nor song,
Nor tenderness they know; nor aught of life,
Beyond the kindred bears that stalk without,
Till morn at length, her roses drooping all,
Shed a long twilight brightening o'er their fields,
And calls the quiver'd savage to the chase.
What can not active government perform,
New-moulding man? Wide-stretching from these shores,
A people savage from remotest time,
A huge neglected empire, one vast mind,
By Heaven inspired, from gothic darkness call'd.
Immortal Peter! first of monarchs! he
His stubborn country tamed, her rocks, her fens,
Her floods, her seas, her ill-submitting sons;
And while the fierce barbarian he subdued,
To more exalted soul he raised the man.
Ye shades of ancient heroes, ye who toil'd
Through long successive ages to build up
A labouring plan of state, behold at once
The wonder done! behold the matchless prince!
Who left his native throne, where reign'd till then
A mighty shadow of unreal power;
Who greatly spurn'd the slothful pomp of courts;
And roaming every land, in every port
His sceptre laid aside, with glorious hand
Unwearied plying the mechanic tool,
Gather'd the seeds of trade, of useful arts,

* M. de Maupertius, in his book on the Figure of the Earth, after having described the beautiful lake and mountain of Niemi, in Lapland, says, "From this height we had opportunity several times to see those vapours rise from the lake, which the people of the country call Haltios, and which they deem to be the guardian spirits of the mountains. We had been frighted with stories of bears that haunted this place, but saw none. It seemed rather a place of resort for fairies and genii, than bears."

† The same author observes, "I was surprised to see upon the banks of this river (the Tenglio) roses of as lively a red as any that are in our gardens.

‡ The other hemisphere.

* Sir Hugh Willoughby, sent by Queen Elizabeth to discover the north-east passage.

Of civil wisdom, and of material skill.
Charged with the stores of Europe home he goes!
Then cities rise amid the illumined waste;
O'er joyless deserts smiles the rural reign;
Far distant flood to flood is social join'd;
The astonish'd Euxine hears the Baltic roar;
Proud navies ride on seas that never foam'd
With daring keel before; and armies stretch
Each way their dazzling files, repressing here
The frantic Alexander of the north,
And awing there stern Othman's shrinking sons.
Sloth flies the land, and Ignorance, and Vice,
Of old dishonour proud: it glows around,
Taught by the Royal Hand that roused the whole,
One scene of arts, of arms, of rising trade:
For what his wisdom plann'd, and power enforced,
More potent still, his great example show'd.
Muttering, the winds at eve, with blunted point,
Blow hollow blustering from the south. Subdued,
The frost resolves into a trickling thaw.
Spotted the mountains shine; loose sleet decends,
And floods the country round. The rivers swell,
Of bonds impatient. Sudden from the hills,
O'er rocks and woods, in broad brown cataracts,
A thousand snow-fed torrents shoot at once;
And, where they rush, the wide resounding plain
Is left one slimy waste. Those sullen seas,
That wash'd the ungenial pole, will rest no more
Beneath the shackles of the mighty north;
But, rousing all their waves, resistless heave.
And hark! the lengthening roar continuous runs
Athwart the rifted deep: at once it bursts,
And piles a thousand mountains to the clouds.
Ill fares the bark with trembling wretches charged,
That, toss'd amid the floating fragments, moors
Beneath the shelter of an icy isle,
While night o'erwhelms the sea, and horror looks
More horrible. Can human force endure
The assembled mischiefs that besiege them round?
Heart-gnawing hunger, fainting weariness,
The roar of winds and waves, the crush of ice,
Now ceasing, now renew'd with louder rage,
And in dire echoes bellowing round the main.
More to embroil the deep, leviathan
And his unwieldy train, in dreadful sport,
Tempest the loosen'd brine, while through the gloom,
Far from the bleak inhospitable shore,
Loading the winds, is heard the hungry howl
Of famish'd monsters, there awaiting wrecks.
Yet Providence, that ever waking eye,
Looks down with pity on the feeble toil
Of mortals lost to hope, and lights them safe,
Through all this dreary labyrinth of fate.
'Tis done! dread Winter spreads his latest glooms,
And reigns tremendous o'er the conquer'd Year.
How dead the vegetable kingdom lies!
How dumb the tuneful! horror wide extends
His desolate domain. Behold, fond man!
See here thy pictured life; pass some few years,
Thy flowering Spring, thy Summer's ardent strength,
Thy sober Autumn fading into age,
And pale concluding Winter comes at last,
And shuts the scene. Ah! whither now are fled
Those dreams of greatness? those unsolid hopes
Of happiness? those longings after fame?
Those restless cares? those busy bustling days?
Those gay-spent, festive nights? those veering thoughts,
Lost between good and ill, that shared thy life?
All now are vanish'd! Virtue sole survives,
Immortal never-failing friend of man,
His guide to happiness on high. And see!
'Tis come, the glorious morn! the second birth
Of heaven and earth! awakening Nature hears
The new creating word, and starts to life,
In every heighten'd form, from pain and death
For ever free. The great eternal scheme,
Involving all, and in a perfect whole
Uniting, as the prospect wider spreads
To reason's eye refined clear up apace.
Ye vainly wise! ye blind presumptuous! now,
Confounded in the dust, adore that Power
And Wisdom oft arraign'd: see now the cause,
Why unassuming worth in secret lived,
And died, neglected: why the good man's share
In life was gaul and bitterness of soul:
Why the lone widow and her orphans pined
In starving solitude; while luxury,
In palaces, lay straining her low though
To form unreal wants: why heaven-born truth,
And moderation fair, wore the red marks
Of superstition's scourge: why licensed pain,
That cruel spoiler, that embosom'd foe,
Embitter'd all our bliss. Ye good distress'd!
Ye noble few! who here unbending stand
Beneath life's pressure, yet bear up a while,
And what your bounded view, which only saw
A little part, deem'd evil is no more:
The storms of Wintry Time will quickly pass,
And one unbounded Spring encircle all.

HYMN.

These, as they change, Almighty Father, these
Are but the varied God. The rolling year
Is full of Thee. Forth in the pleasing Spring
Thy beauty walks, thy tenderness and love.
Wide flush the fields; the softening air is balm
Echo the mountains round; the forest smiles;
And every sense and every heart is joy.
Then comes thy glory in the Summer-months,
With light and heat refulgent. Then thy sun
Shoots full perfection through the rolling year:
And oft thy voice in dreadful thunder speaks:
And oft at dawn, deep noon, or falling eve,

By brooks and groves, in hollow-whispering gales
Thy bounty shines in Autumn unconfined,
And spreads a common feast for all that lives.
In Winter awful Thou! with clouds and storms
Around Thee thrown, tempest o'er tempest roll'd
Majestic darkness! on the whirlwind's wing,
Riding sublime, thou bidst the world adore,
And humblest Nature with thy northern blast.

Mysterious round! what skill, what force divine,
Deep felt, in these appear! a simple train,
Yet so delightful mix'd, with such kind art,
Such beauty and beneficence combined;
Shade, unperceived, so softening into shade;
And all so forming an harmonious whole;
That as they still succeed, they ravish still.
But wandering oft, with brute unconscious gaze,
Man marks not Thee, marks not the mighty hand
That, ever busy, wheels the silent spheres;
Works in the secret deep; shoots, steaming, thence
The fair profusion that o'erspreads the Spring:
Flings from the sun direct the flaming day;
Feeds every creature; hurls the tempest forth;
And, as on earth this grateful change revolves,
With transport touches all the springs of life.

Nature attend! join, every living soul,
Beneath the spacious temple of the sky,
In adoration join; and, ardent, raise
One general song! To Him, ye vocal gales,
Breathe soft, whose Spirit in your freshness breathes:
Oh, talk of Him in solitary glooms!
Where, o'er the rock the scarcely waving pine
Fills the brown shade with a religious awe.
And ye, whose bolder note is heard afar,
Who shake the astonish'd world, lift high to heaven
The impetuous song, and say from whom you rage.
His praise, ye brooks, attune, ye trembling rills;
And let me catch it as I muse along.
Ye headlong torrents, rapid, and profound;
Ye softer floods, that lead the human maze
Along the vale; and thou, majestic main,
A secret world of wonders in thyself,
Sound His stupendous praise; whose greater voice
Or bids you roar, or bids your roarings fall.
Soft roll your incense, herbs, and fruits, and flowers,
In mingled clouds to Him; whose sun exalts,
Whose breath perfumes you, and whose pencil paints,
Ye forests bend, ye harvests, wave, to Him;
Breathe your still song into the reaper's heart,
As home he goes beneath the joyous moon.
Ye that keep watch in heaven, as earth asleep
Unconscious lies, effuse your mildest beams,
Ye constellations, while your angels strike,
Amid the spangled sky, the silver lyre.
Great source of day! best image here below
Of thy Creator, ever pouring wide,
From world to world, the vital ocean round,
On Nature write with every beam his praise.
The thunder rolls: be hush'd the prostrate world:
While cloud to cloud returns the solemn hymn.
Bleat out afresh, ye hills, ye mossy rocks
Retain the sound: the broad responsive low,
Ye valleys raise; for the Great Shepherd reigns;
And his unsuffering kingdom yet will come.
Ye woodlands all, awake: a boundless song
Burst from the groves! and when the restless day,
Expiring, lays the warbling world asleep,
Sweetest of birds! sweet Philomela, charm
The listening shades, and teach the night His praise.
Ye chief, for whom the whole creation smiles,
At once the head, the heart, and tongue of all,
Crown the great hymn; in swarming cities vast,
Assembled men, to the deep organ join
The long resounding voice, oft breaking clear,
At solemn pauses, through the swelling base;
And, as each mingling flame increases each,
In one united ardour rise to heaven.
Or if you rather choose the rural shade,
And find a fane in every sacred grove;
There let the shepherd's flute, the virgin's lay,
The prompting seraph, and the poet's lyre,
Still sing the God of Seasons, as they roll!
For me, when I forget the darling theme,
Whether the blossom blows, the summer-ray
Russets the plain, inspiring Autumn gleams;
Or Winter rises in the blackening east;
Be my tongue mute, may fancy paint no more,
And, dead to joy, forget my heart to beat!

Should fate command me to the farthest verge
Of the green earth, to distant barbarous climes,
Rivers unknown to song; where first the sun
Gilds Indian mountains, or his setting beam
Flames on the Atlantic isles; 'tis nought to me:
Since God is ever present, ever felt,
In the void waste as in the city full;
And where He vital breathes there must be joy.
When even at last the solemn hour shall come,
And wing my mystic flight to future worlds,
I cheerful will obey; there, with new powers,
Will rising wonders sing: I can not go
Where Universal Love not smiles around,
Sustaining all yon orbs, and all their sons;
From seeming Evil still educing Good,
And better thence again, and better still,
In infinite progression. But I lose
Myself in Him, in Light ineffable!
Come then, expressive Silence, muse his praise.

SPECIMEN OF THE ALTERATIONS
Made by Thomson in the early editions of the Seasons.

'Tis done!—dread Winter *has subdu'd the Year*,
And reigns, tremendous, o'er *the desart plains!*
How dead the Vegetable Kingdom lies!
How dumb the tuneful! Horror wide extends
His *solitary empire—now*, fond Man!
Behold thy pictur'd life: Pass some few Years,
Thy flowering Spring, thy *short-liv'd Summer's* strength,
Thy sober Autumn, fading into age,
And pale, concluding Winter *shuts thy scene*,
And *shrouds Thee in the Grave. Where now* are fled
Those Dreams of Greatness? those unsolid Hopes
Of Happiness? those longings after Fame?
Those restless Cares? those busy, bustling Days?
Those *Nights of secret guilt?* those veering thoughts,
Fluttering 'twixt Good, and Ill, that shar'd thy Life?
All, now, are vanish'd! Virtue, sole, survives
Immortal, *Mankind's never-failing Friend*,
His Guide to Happiness on high—and see!
'Tis come, the Glorious Morn! the second Birth
Of Heaven and Earth!—awakening Nature hears
Th' *Almighty Trumpet's Voice*, and starts to Life,
Renew'd, unfading. Now, th' Eternal Scheme,
That Dark Perplexity, that Mystic maze,
Which Sight cou'd never trace, nor Heart conceive,
To Reason's Eye, refin'd, clears up apace.
Angels, and Men, astonish'd pause—and dread
To travel thro' the Depths of Providence,
Untry'd, unbounded. Ye vain learned! see,
And, prostrate in the Dust, adore that Power,
And *Goodness*, oft arraign'd. See now the cause,
Why *conscious* worth, *oppress'd, in secret, long,*
Mourn'd, unregarded: why the good Man's share
In Life, was Gall, and Bitterness of Soul:
Why the lone Widow, and her Orphans, pin'd,
In starving Solitude; while Luxury,
In Palaces, lay *prompting* her low thought
To form unreal Wants: Why Heaven-born *Faith*,
And *Charity, prime Grace*, wore the red marks
Of *Persecution's* Scourge: Why licens'd Pain
That cruel Spoiler, that embosom'd Foe,
Imbitter'd all our Bliss. Ye Good Distrest!
Ye noble Few! *that* here, unbending, stand
Beneath Life's Pressures—yet *a little* while,
And all your woes are past. Time swiftly fleets,
And wish'd Eternity, approaching, brings
Life undecaying, Love without Allay,
Pure flowing Joy, and Happiness sincere.

The concluding lines of Winter, taken from the 2nd Edit. 1726,—those words printed in italic show how much has been altered by the author.

The Castle of Indolence.

[This poem being writ in the manner of Spenser, the obsolete words, and a simplicity of diction in some of the lines, which borders on the ludicrous, were necessary to make the imitation more perfect. And the style of that admirable poet, as well as the measure in which he wrote, are, as it were, appropriated by custom to all allegorical Poems writ in our language; just as in French, the style of Marot, who lived under Francis the First, has been used in tales, and familiar epistles, by the politest writers of the age of Louis the Fourteenth.]

CANTO I.

The castle hight of Indolence,
And its false luxury;
Where for a little time, alas!
We lived right jollily.

I.

O MORTAL man, who livest here by toil,
Do not complain of this thy hard estate;
That like an emmet thou must ever moil,
Is a sad sentence of an ancient date;
And, certes, there is for it reason great;
For, though sometimes it makes thee weep and wail,
And curse thy star, and carly drudge and late;
Withouten that would come a heavier bale,
Loose life, unruly passions, and diseases pale.

II.

In lowly dale, fast by a river's side,
With woody hill o'er hill encompass'd round,
A most enchanting wizard did abide,
Than whom a fiend more fell is no where found.
It was, I ween, a lovely spot of ground;
And there a season atween June and May,
Half prankt with spring, with summer half imbrown'd,
A listless climate made, where sooth to say,
No living wight could work, ne cared even for play.

III.

Was nought around but images of rest:
Sleep-soothing groves, and quiet lawns between,
And flowery beds that slumbrous influence kest,
From poppies breathed; and beds of pleasant green,

Where never yet was creeping creature seen.
Meantime unnumber'd glittering streamlets play'd,
And hurled every where their waters sheen;
That, as they bicker'd through the sunny glade,
Though restless still themselves, a lulling murmur made.

IV.

Join'd to the prattle of the purling rills
Were heard the lowing herds along the vale,
And flocks loud bleating from the distant hills,
And vacant shepherds piping in the dale;
And, now and then, sweet Philomel would wail,
Or stock-doves plain amid the forest deep,
That drowsy rustled to the sighing gale;
And still a coil the grasshopper did keep;
Yet all these sounds yblent inclined all to sleep.

V.

Full in the passage of the vale above,
A sable, silent, solemn forest stood;
Where nought but shadowy forms were seen to move,
As Idless fancied in her dreaming mood:
And up the hills, on either side, a wood
Of blackening pines, aye waving to and fro,
Sent forth a sleepy horror through the blood;
And where this valley winded out, below,
The murmuring main was heard, and scarcely heard to flow.

VI.

A pleasing land of drowsy head it was,
Of dreams that wave before the half-shut eye;
And of gay castles in the clouds that pass,
For ever flushing round a summer sky:
There eke the soft delights, that witchingly
Instil a wanton sweetness through the breast,
And the calm pleasures always hover'd nigh;
But whate'er smack'd of noyance, or unrest,
Was far, far off expell'd from this delicious nest.

VII.

The landscape such, inspiring perfect ease,
Where INDOLENCE (for so the wizard hight)
Close-hid his castle mid embowering trees,
That half shut out the beams of Phœbus bright,
And made a kind of checker'd day and night;
Meanwhile, unceasing at the massy gate,
Beneath a spacious palm, the wicked wight
Was placed; and to his lute, of cruel fate
And labour harsh, complained, lamenting man's estate.

VIII.

Thither continual pilgrims crowded still,
From all the roads of earth that pass there by:
For, as they chaunced to breathe on neighbouring hill,
The freshness of this valley smote their eye,
And drew them ever and anon more nigh;
Till clustering round the enchanter false they hung,
Ymolten with his syren melody;
While o'er the enfeebling lute his hand he flung,
And to the trembling chords these tempting verses sung:

IX.

"Behold! ye pilgrims of this earth, behold!
See all but man, with unearn'd pleasure gay:
See her bright robes the butterfly unfold,
Broke from her wintry tomb in prime of May!
What youthful bride can equal her array?
Who can with her for easy pleasure vie?
From mead to mead with gentle wing to stray,
From flower to flower on balmy gales to fly,
Is all she has to do beneath the radiant sky.

X.

"Behold the merry minstrels of the morn,
The swarming songsters of the careless grove,
Ten thousand throats! that from the flowering thorn,
Hymn their good God, and carol sweet of love,
Such grateful kindly raptures them emove:
They neither plough nor sow: ne, fit for flail,
E'er to the barn the nodden sheaves they drove,
Yet theirs each harvest dancing in the gale,
Whatever crowns the hill, or smiles along the vale.

XI.

"Outcast of nature, man! the wretched thrall
Of bitter dropping sweat, of sweltry pain,
Of cares that eat away the heart with gall,
And of the vices, an inhuman train,
That all proceed from savage thirst of gain:
For when hard-hearted interest first began
To poison earth, Astræa left the plain;
Guile, violence, and murder seized on man,
And, for soft milky streams, with blood the rivers ran.

XII.

"Come, ye, who still the cumbrous load of life
Push hard up hill; but as the furthest steep
You trust to gain, and put an end to strife,
Down thunders back the stone with mighty sweep,
And hurls your labours to the valley deep,
For ever vain: come, and without fee,
I in oblivion will your sorrows steep,
Your cares, your toils; will steep you in a sea
Of full delight: O come, ye weary wights, to me!

XIII.

"With me, you need not rise at early dawn,
To pass the joyless day in various stounds;
Or, louting low, on upstart fortune fawn,
And sell fair honour for some paltry pounds;
Or through the city take your dirty rounds,
To cheat, and dun, and lie, and visit pay,
Now flattering base, now giving secret wounds;
Or prowl in courts of law for human prey,
In venal senate thieve, or rob on broad highway.

XIV.

"No cocks, with me, to rustic labour call,
From village on to village sounding clear;
To tardy swain no shrill-voiced matrons squall;
No dogs, no babes, no wives, to stun your ear;
No hammers thump; no horrid blacksmith sear,
Ne noisy tradesman your sweet slumbers start,
With sounds that are a misery to hear:
But all is calm, as would delight the heart
Of Sybarite of old, all nature and all art.

XV.

"Here nought but candour reigns, indulgent ease,
Good-natured lounging, sauntering up and down,
They who are pleased themselves must always please;
On others' ways they never squint a frown,
Nor heed what haps in hamlet or in town:
Thus, from the source of tender Indolence,
With milky blood the heart is overflown,
Is sooth'd and sweeten'd by the social sense;
For interest, envy, pride, and strife are banish'd hence.

XVI.

"What, what is virtue but repose of mind,
A pure ethereal calm, that knows no storm;
Above the reach of wild ambition's wind,
Above those passions that this world deform,
And torture man, a proud malignant worm?
But here, instead, soft gales of passion play,
And gently stir the heart, thereby to form
A quicker sense of joy; as breezes stray
Across the enliven'd skies, and make them still more gay.

XVII.

'The best of men have ever loved repose.
They hate to mingle in the filthy fray;
Where the soul sours, and gradual rancour grows,
Imbitter'd more from peevish day to day.
E'en those whom fame has lent her fairest ray,
The most renown'd of worthy wights of yore,
From a base world at last have stolen away:
So Scipio, to the soft Cumæan shore
Retiring, tasted joy he never knew before.

XVIII.

'But if a little exercise you choose,
Some zest for ease, 'tis not forbidden here:
Amid the groves you may indulge the Muse,
Or tend the blooms, and deck the vernal year;
Or softly stealing, with your watery gear,
Along the brooks, the crimson-spotted fry
You may delude: the whilst, amused, you hear
Now the hoarse stream, and now the zephyr's sigh,
Attuned to the birds, and woodland melody.

XIX.

'O grievous folly! to heap up estate,
Losing the days you see beneath the sun;
When, sudden, comes blind unrelenting fate,
And gives the untasted portion you have won
With ruthless toil, and many a wretch undone,
To those who mock you, gone to Pluto's reign,
There with sad ghosts to pine, and shadows dun:
But sure it is of vanities most vain,
To toil for what you here untoiling may obtain.'

XX.

He ceased. But still their trembling ears retain'd
The deep vibrations of his witching song;
That, by a kind of magic power, constrain'd
To enter in, pell-mell, the listening throng.
Heaps pour'd on heaps, and yet they slipt along,
In silent ease; as when beneath the beam
Of summer-moons, the distant woods among,
Or by some flood all silver'd with the gleam,
The soft-embodied fays through airy portal stream:

XXI.

By the smooth demon so it order'd was,
And here his baneful bounty first began:
Though some there were who would not further pass,
And his alluring baits suspected han.
The wise distrust the too fair-spoken man.
Yet through the gate they cast a wishful eye:
Not to move on, perdie, is all they can:
For do their very best they can not fly,
But often each way look, and often sorely sigh.

XXII.

When this the watchful wicked wizard saw,
With sudden spring he leap'd upon them straight;
And soon as touch'd by his unhallow'd paw,
They found themselves within the cursed gate;
Full hard to be repass'd, like that of fate.
Not stronger were of old the giant crew,
Who sought to pull high Jove from regal state;
Though feeble wretch he seem'd, of sallow hue:
Certes, who bides his grasp, will that encounter rue.

XXIII.

For whomsoe'er the villain takes in hand,
Their joints unknit, their sinews melt apace;
As lithe they grow as any willow-wand,
And of their vanish'd force remains no trace:
So when a maiden fair, of modest grace,
In all her buxom blooming May of charms,
Is seized in some losel's hot embrace,
She waxeth very weakly as she warms,
Then sighing yields her up to love's delicious harms.

XIV.

Waked by the crowd, slow from his bench arose
A comely, full-spread porter, swoln with sleep:
His calm, broad, thoughtless aspect breathed repose;
And in sweet torpor he was plunged deep,
Ne could himself from ceaseless yawning keep;
While o'er his eyes the drowsy liquor ran,
Through which his half-waked soul would faintly peep:
Then taking his black staff, he call'd his man,
And roused himself as much as rouse himself he can.

XXV.

The lad leap'd lightly at his master's call:
He was, to weet, a little roguish page,
Save sleep and play who minded nought at all,
Like most the untaught striplings of his age.
This boy he kept each band to disengage,
Garters and buckles, task for him unfit,
But ill becoming his grave personage,
And which his portly paunch would not permit;
So this same limber page to all performed it.

XXVI.

Meantime, the master-porter wide display'd
Great store of caps, of slippers, and of gowns;
Wherewith he those who enter'd in array'd
Loose, as the breeze that plays along the downs,
And waves the summer-woods when evening frowns:
O fair undress, best dress! it checks no vein,
But every flowing limb in pleasure drowns,
And heightens ease with grace. This done, right fain,
Sir porter sat him down, and turn'd to sleep again.

XXVII.

Thus easy robed, they to the fountain sped
That in the middle of the court up-threw
A stream, high spouting from its liquid bed,
And falling back again in drizzly dew;
There each deep draughts, as deep he thirsted, drew;
It was a fountain of nepenthe rare;
Whence, as Dan Homer sings, huge pleasance grew,
And sweet oblivion of vile earthly care;
Fair gladsome waking thoughts, and joyous dreams more fair.

XXVIII.

This right perform'd, all inly pleased and still,
Withouten tromp, was proclamation made:
'Ye sons of Indolence, do what you will;
And wander where you list, through hall or glade;
Be no man's pleasure for another staid;
Let each as likes him best his hours employ,
And cursed be he who minds his neighbour's trade!
Here dwells kind ease and unreproving joy:
He little merits bliss who others can annoy.'

XXIX.

Straight of these endless numbers, swarming round,
As thick as idle motes in sunny ray,
Not one eftsoons in view was to be found,
But every man stroll'd off his own glad way,
Wide o'er this ample court's blank area,
With all the lodges that thereto pertain'd,
No living creature could be seen to stray;
While solitude, and perfect silence reign'd;
So that to think you dreamt you almost was constrain'd.

XXX.

As when a shepherd of the Hebrid-Isles,*
Placed far amid the melancholy main,
(Whether it be lone fancy him beguiles;
Or that aerial beings sometimes deign
To stand, embodied, to our senses plain)
Sees on the naked hill, or valley low,
The whilst in ocean Phœbus dips his wain,
A vast assembly moving to and fro:
Then all at once in air dissolves the wondrous show.

XXXI.

Ye gods of quiet, and of sleep profound!
Whose soft dominion o'er this castle sways,
And all the widely silent places round,
Forgive me, if my trembling pen displays
What never yet was sung in mortal lays.
But how shall I attempt such arduous string?
I who have spent my nights, and nightly days
In this soul-deadening place loose-loitering:
Ah! how shall I for this uprear my moulted wing?

XXXII.

Come on, my muse, nor stoop to low despair,
Thou imp of Jove, touch'd by celestial fire!

* Those isles on the west coast of Scotland, called the Hebrides.

Thou yet shall sing of war, and actions fair,
Which the bold sons of Britain will inspire;
Of ancient bards thou yet shall sweep the lyre;
Thou yet shall tread in tragic pall the stage,
Paint love's enchanting woes, the hero's ire,
The sage's calm, the patriots noble rage,
Dashing corruption down through every worthless age.

XXXIII.

The doors, that knew no shrill alarming bell;
Ne cursed knocker plied by villain's hand,
Self-open'd into halls, where, who can tell
What elegance and grandeur wide expand;
The pride of Turkey and of Persia land?
Soft quilts on quilts, on carpets carpets spread,
And couches stretch'd around in seemly band;
And endless pillows rise to prop the head;
So that each spacious room was one full-swelling bed;

XXXIV.

And every where huge cover'd tables stood,
With wines high-flavour'd and rich viands crown'd;
Whatever sprightly juice or tasteful food
On the green bosom of this earth are found,
And all old ocean 'genders in his round:
Some hand unseen these silently display'd,
Even undemanded by a sign or sound;
You need but wish, and instantly obey'd,
Fair ranged the dishes rose, and thick the glasses play'd.

XXXV.

Here freedom reign'd, without the least alloy;
Nor gossip's tale, nor ancient maiden's gall,
Nor saintly spleen durst murmur at our joy,
And with envenom'd tongue our pleasures pall.
For why? there was but one great rule for all;
To wit, that each should work his own desire,
And eat, drink, study, sleep, as it may fall,
Or melt the time in love, or wake the lyre,
And carol what, unbid, the muses might inspire.

XXXVI.

The rooms with costly tapestry were hung,
Where was inwoven many a gentle tale;
Such as of old the rural poets sung,
Or of Arcadian or Sicilian vale:
Reclining lovers, in the lonely dale,
Pour'd forth at large the sweetly tortured heart;
Or, sighing tender passion, swell'd the gale,
And taught charm'd echo to resound their smart;
While flocks, woods, streams around, repose and peace impart.

XXXVII.

Those pleased the most, where, by a cunning hand,
Depainted was the patriarchal age;
What time Dan Abraham left the Chaldee land,
And pastured on from verdant stage to stage,
Where fields and fountains fresh could best engage.
Toil was not then: of nothing took they heed,
But with wild beasts the silvan war to wage,
And o'er vast plains their herds and flocks to feed:
Bless'd sons of nature they! true golden age indeed!

XXXVIII.

Sometimes the pencil, in cool airy halls,
Bade the gay bloom of vernal landscapes rise,
Or Autumn's varied shades imbrown the walls:
Now the black tempest strikes the astonish'd eyes;
Now down the steep the flashing torrent flies,
The trembling sun now plays o'er ocean blue,
And now rude mountains frown amid the skies;
Whate'er Lorraine light-touch'd with softening hue,
Or savage Rosa dash'd, or learned Poussin drew.

XXXIX.

Each sound too here to languishment inclined,
Lull'd the weak bosom, and induced ease;
Aerial music in the warbling wind,
At distance rising oft, by small degrees,
Nearer and nearer came, till o'er the trees
It hung, and breathed such soul-dissolving airs,
As did, alas! with soft perdition please:
Entangled deep in its enchanting snares,
The listening heart forgot all duties and all cares.

XL.

A certain music, never known before
Here lull'd the pensive, melancholy mind;
Full easily obtain'd. Behoves no more,
But sidelong, to the gently waving wind,
To lay the well tuned instrument reclined;
From which, with airy flying fingers light,
Beyond each mortal touch the most refined,
The god of winds drew sounds of deep delight;
Whence, with just cause, the harp of Æolus it hight.*

XLI.

Ah me! what hand can touch the string so fine?
Who up the lofty diapasan roll

* The Æolian harp, here designated, has been greatly improved in its structure by a kindred poet, the author of 'The Farmer's Boy.'

Such sweet, such sad, such solemn airs divine,
Then let them down again into the soul:
Now rising love they fann'd; now pleasing dole
They breathed, in tender musings, thro' the heart;
And now a graver sacred strain they stole,
As when seraphic hands a hymn impart:
Wild warbling nature all, above the reach of art!

XLII.

Such the gay splendour, the luxurious state,
Of Caliphs old, who on the Tygris' shore,
In mighty Bagdat, populous and great,
Held their bright court, where was of ladies store;
And verse, love, music, still the garland wore:
When sleep was coy, the bard,* in waiting there,
Cheer'd the lone midnight with the muse's lore;
Composing music bade his dreams be fair,
And music lent new gladness to the morning air.

XLIII.

Near the pavilions where we slept, still ran
Soft trinkling streams, and dashing waters fell,
And sobbing breezes sigh'd, and oft began
(So work'd the wizard) wintry storms to swell,
As heaven and earth they would together mell:
At doors and windows, threatening, seem'd to call
The demons of the tempest, growling fell,
Yet the least entrance found they none at all;
Whence sweeter grew our sleep, secure in massy hall.

XLIV.

And hither Morpheus sent his kindest dreams,
Raising a world of gayer tinct and grace;
O'er which were shadowy cast elysian gleams,
That play'd, in waving lights, from place to place,
And shed a roseate smile on nature's face.
Not Titian's pencil e'er could so array,
So fleece with clouds the pure ethereal space;
Ne could it e'er such melting forms display,
As loose on flowery beds all languishingly lay.

XLV.

No, fair illusions! artful phantoms, no!
My Muse will not attempt your fairy land:
She has no colours that like you can glow:
To catch your vivid scenes too gross her hand.
But sure it is, was ne'er a subtler band
Than these same guileful angel-seeming sprights,
Who thus in dreams voluptuous, soft, and bland,
Pour'd all the Arabian heaven upon our nights,
And bless'd them oft besides with more refined delights.

XLVI.

They were, in sooth, a most enchanting train,
Even feigning virtue; skilful to unite
With evil good, and strew with pleasure pain.
But for those fiends, whom blood and broils de light;
Who hurl the wretch, as if to hell outright,
Down down black gulfs, where sullen waters sleep,
Or hold him clambering all the fearful night
On beetling cliffs, or pent in ruins deep;
They, till due time should serve, were bid far hence to keep.

XLVII.

Ye guardian spirits, to whom man is dear,
From these foul demons shield the midnight gloom:
Angels of fancy and of love, be near,
And o'er the blank of sleep diffuse a bloom:
Evoke the sacred shades of Greece and Rome,
And let them virtue with a look impart:
But chief, a while, O! lend us from the tomb
Those long lost friends for whom in love we smart,
And fill with pious awe and joy-mix'd wo the heart.

XLVI .

Or are you sportive——Bid the morn of youth
Rise to new light, and beam afresh the days
Of innocence, simplicity, and truth;
To cares estranged, and manhood's thorny ways.
What transport, to retrace our boyish plays,
Our easy bliss, when each thing joy supplied;
The woods, the mountains, and the warbling maze
Of the wild brooks!—but, fondly wandering wide,
My Muse, resume the task that yet doth thee abide.

XLIX.

One great amusement of our household was,
In a huge crystal magic globe to spy,
Still as you turn'd it, all things that do pass
Upon this ant-hill earth; where constantly
Of idly busy men the restless fry
Runs bustling to and fro with foolish haste,
In search of pleasures vain that from them fly,
Or which, obtain'd, the caitiffs dare not taste:—
When nothing is enjoy'd, can there be greater waste?

* The Arabian Caliphs had poets among the officers of their court, whose office it was to do what is here described.

L.

'Of vanity the mirror,' this was call'd:
Here, you a muckworm of the town might see,
At his dull desk, amid his ledgers stall'd,
Eat up with carking care and penury;
Most like to carcase parch'd on gallow-tree.
'A penny saved is a penny got:'
Firm to this scoundrel maxim keepeth he,
Ne of its rigour will he bate a jot,
Till it has quench'd his fire, and banished his pot.

LI.

Straight from the filth of this low grub, behold!
Comes fluttering forth a gaudy spendthrift heir,
All glossy gay, enamel'd all with gold,
The silly tenant of the summer air,
In folly lost, of nothing takes he care;
Pimps, lawyers, stewards, harlots, flatterers vile,
And thieving tradesmen him among them share:
His father's ghost from limbo lake, the while,
Sees this, which more damnation doth upon him pile.

LII.

This globe pourtray'd the race of learned men,
Still at their books, and turning o'er the page,
Backwards and forwards: oft they snatch the pen,
As if inspired, and in a Thespian rage;
Then write, and blot, as would your ruth engage:
Why, authors, all this scrawl and scribbling sore?
To lose the present, gain the future age,
Praised to be when you can hear no more,
And much enrich'd with fame, when useless worldly store.

LIII.

Then would a splendid city rise to view,
With carts, and cars, and coaches roaring all:
Wide-pour'd abroad behold the giddy crew:
See how they dash along from wall to wall!
At every door, hark how they thundering call!
Good lord! what can this giddy rout excite?
Why, on each other with fell tooth to fall;
A neighbour's fortune, fame, or peace, to blight,
And make new tiresome parties for the coming night.

LIV.

The puzzling sons of party next appear'd,
In dark cabals and nightly juntos met;
And now they whisper'd close, now shrugging rear'd
The important shoulder; then, as if to get
New light, their twinkling eyes were inward set.
No sooner Lucifer* recalls affairs,
Than forth they various rush in mighty fret;
When lo! push'd up to power, and crown'd their cares,
In comes another set, and kicketh them down stairs.

LV.

But what most show'd the vanity of life
Was to behold the nations all on fire,
In cruel broils engaged, and deadly strife:
Most christian kings, inflamed by black desire,
With honourable ruffians in their hire,
Cause war to rage, and blood around to pour;
Of this sad work when each begins to tire,
Then sit them down just where they were before,
Till for new scenes of wo peace shall their force restore.

LVI.

To number up the thousands dwelling here,
A useless were, and eke an endless task;
From kings, and those who at the helm appear,
To gipsies brown in summer-glades who bask.
Yea many a man, perdie, I could unmask,
Whose desk and table make a solemn show,
With tape-tied trash, and suits of fools that ask
For place or pension laid in decent row;
But these I passen by, with nameless numbers moe.

LVII.

Of all the gentle tenants of the place,
There was a man of special grave remark;
A certain tender gloom o'erspread his face,
Pensive, not sad; in thought involved, not dark;
As soot this man could sing as morning lark,
And teach the noblest morals of the heart:
But these his talents were yburied stark;
Of the fine stores he nothing would impart,
Which or boon nature gave, or nature-painting art.

LVIII.

To noontide shades incontinent he ran,
Where purls the brook with sleep-inviting sound;
Or when Dan Sol to slope his wheels began,
Amid the broom he bask'd him on the ground,
Where the wild thyme and camomile are found:
There would he linger, till the latest ray
Of light sat trembling on the welkin's bound;
Then homeward through the twilight shadows stray,
Sauntering and slow. So had he passed many a day.

LIX.

Yet not in thoughtless slumber were they past:
For oft the heavenly fire, that lay conceal'd
Beneath the sleeping embers, mounted fast,
And all its native light anew reveal'd:
Oft as he traversed the cerulean field,

* The Morning star.

And mark'd the clouds that drove before the wind,
Ten thousand glorious systems would he build,
Ten thousand great ideas fill'd his mind;
But with the clouds they fled, and left no trace behind.

LX.

With him was sometimes join'd, in silent walk,
(Profoundly silent, for they never spoke)
One* shyer still, who quite detested talk:
Oft, stung by spleen, at once away he broke,
To groves of pine, and broad o'ershadowing oak;
There, inly thrill'd, he wander'd all alone,
And on himself his pensive fury wroke,
Ne ever utter'd word, save when first shone
The glittering star of eve—'Thank heaven! the day is done.'

LXI.

Here lurk'd a wretch, who had not crept abroad
For forty years, ne face of mortal seen;
In chamber brooding like a loathly toad:
And sure his linen was not very clean.
Through secret loop holes, that had practised been
Near to his bed, his dinner vile he took;
Unkempt, and rough, of squalid face and mien,
Our Castle's shame! whence, from his filthy nook,
We drove the villain out for fitter lair to look.

LXII.

One day there chanced into these halls to rove
A joyous youth, who took you at first sight;
Him the wild wave of pleasure hither drove,
Before the sprightly tempest tossing light:
Certes, he was a most engaging wight,
Of social glee, and wit humane though keen,
Turning the night to day and day to night:
For him the merry bells had rung, I ween,
If in this nook of quiet bells had ever been.

LXIII.

But not e'en pleasure to excess is good:
What most elates, then sinks the soul as low:
When springtide joy pours in with copious flood,
The higher still the exulting billows flow,
The further back again they flagging go,
And leave us groveling on the dreary shore:
Taught by this son of joy, we found it so;
Who, whilst he staid, he kept in gay uproar
Our madden'd castle all, the abode of sleep no more.

LXIV.

As when in prime of June a burnish'd fly,
Sprung from the meads, o'er which he sweeps along,
Cheer'd by the breathing bloom and vital sky,
Tunes up amid these airy halls his song,
Soothing at first the gay reposing throng:
And oft he sips their bowl; or nearly drown'd,
He, thence recovering, drives their beds among,
And scares their tender sleep, with trump profound;
Then out again he flies, to wing his mazy round.

LXV.

Another guest* there was, of sense refined,
Who felt each worth, for every worth he had;
Serene yet warm, humane yet firm his mind,
As little touch'd as any man's with bad:
Him through their inmost walks the Muses lad,
To him the sacred love of nature lent,
And sometimes would he make our valley glad;
When as we found he would not here be pent,
To him the better sort this friendly message sent:

LXVI.

"Come, dwell with us! true son of virtue, come!
But if, alas! we can not thee persuade
To lie content beneath our peaceful dome,
Ne ever more to quit our quiet glade;
Yet when at last thy toils but ill apaid
Shall dead thy fire, and damp its heavenly spark,
Thou wilt be glad to seek the rural shade,
There to indulge the muse, and nature mark:
We then a lodge for thee will rear in Hagley Park."

LXVII.

Here whilom ligg'd the Esopus† of the age:
But call'd by fame, in soul ypricked deep,
A noble pride restored him to the stage,
And roused him like a giant from his sleep.
Even from his slumbers we advantage reap:
With double force the enliven'd scene he wakes,
Yet quits not nature's bounds. He knows to keep
Each due decorum: now the heart he shakes,
And now with well earn'd sense the enlighten'd judgment takes.

LXVIII.

A bard here dwelt, more fat than bard beseems;
Who,‡ void of envy, guile, and lust of gain,
On virtue still, and nature's pleasing themes,
Pour'd forth his unpremeditated strain:
The world forsaking with a calm disdain,
Here laugh'd he careless in his easy seat;
Here quaff'd, encircled with the joyous train,
Oft moralizing sage: his ditty sweet
He loathed much to write, ne cared to repeat.

Conjecture has applied this to Dr. Armstrong, the poet.

* George, Lord Lyttelton.

† Mr. Quin.

‡ The following lines of this stanza were writ by a friend of the author (since understood to have been Lord Lyttelton), and were designed to portray the character of Thomson.

LXIX.

Full oft by holy feet our ground was trod,
Of clerks good plenty here you mote espy.
A little, round, fat, oily man* of God,
Was one I chiefly mark'd among the fry:
He had a roguish twinkle in his eye,
And shone all glittering with ungodly dew,
If a tight damsel chanced to trippen by;
Which when observed, he shrunk into his mew,
And straight would recollect his piety anew.

LXX.

Nor be forgot a tribe, who minded nought
(Old inmates of the place) but state-affairs:
They look'd, perdie, as if they deeply thought;
And on their brow set every nation's cares;
The world by them is parcel'd out in shares,
When in the Hall of Smoke they congress hold,
And the sage berry, sun-burnt Mocha bears,
Has clear'd their inward eye: then, smoke-enroll'd,
Their oracles break forth mysterious as of old.

LXXI.

Here languid Beauty kept her pale-faced court:
Bevies of dainty dames, of high degree,
From every quarter hither made resort;
Where, from gross mortal care and business free,
They lay, pour'd out in ease and luxury.
Or should they a vain show of work assume,
Alas! and well-a-day! what can it be?
To knot, to twist, to range the vernal bloom;
But far is cast the distaff, spinning-wheel, and loom.

LXXII.

Their only labour was to kill the time;
(And labour dire it is, and weary wo)
They sit, they loll, turn o'er some idle rhyme;
Then, rising sudden, to the glass they go,
Or saunter forth, with tottering step and slow:
This soon too rude an exercise they find;
Straight on the couch their limbs again they throw,
Where hours on hours they sighing lie reclined,
And court the vapoury god, soft breathing in the wind.†

LXXIII.

Now must I mark the villany we found,
But ah! too late, as shall eftsoons be shown.
A place here was, deep, dreary, under ground;
Where still our inmates, when unpleasing grown,
Diseased, and loathsome, privily were thrown:
Far from the light of heaven, they languish'd there:
Unpitied uttering many a bitter groan;
For of these wretches taken was no care:
Fierce fiends, and hags of hell, their only nurses were.

LXXIV.

Alas! the change! from scenes of joy and rest,
To this dark den, where sickness toss'd alway.
Here Lethargy, with deadly sleep oppress'd,
Stretch'd on his back, a mighty lubbard, lay,
Heaving his sides, and snored night and day;
To stir him from his traunce it was not eath,
And his half-open'd eyne he shut straightway;
He led, I wot, the softest way to death,
And taught withouten pain and strife to yield the breath.

LXXV.

Of limbs enormous, but withal unsound,
Soft-swoln and pale, here lay the Hydropsy:
Unwieldy man; with belly monstrous round,
For ever fed with watery supply;
For still he drank, and yet he still was dry.
And moping here did Hypochondria sit,
Mother of spleen, in robes of various dye,
Who vexed was full oft with ugly fit;
And some her frantic deem'd, and some her deem'd a wit.

LXXVI.

A lady proud she was, of ancient blood,
Yet oft her fear her pride made crouchen low:
She felt, or fancied in her fluttering mood,
All the diseases which the spittles know,
And sought all physics which the shops bestow,
And still new leaches and new drugs would try,
Her humour ever wavering to and fro:
For sometimes she would laugh, and sometimes cry,
Then sudden waxed wroth, and all she knew not why.

LXXVII.

Fast by her side a listless maiden pined,
With aching head, and squeamish heart-burnings;
Pale, bloated, cold, she seem'd to hate mankind,
Yet loved in secret all forbidden things,
And here the Tertian shakes his chilling wings

* The Rev. Mr. Murdoch, Thomson's friend and biographer.

† After this stanza, the following one was introduced, in the edition of 1746:

One nymph there was, methought, in bloom of May,
On whom the idle Fiend glanced many a look,
In hopes to lead her down the slippery way
To taste of Pleasure's deep deceitful brook:
No virtues yet her gentle mind forsook:
No idle whims, no vapours fill'd her brain,
But Prudence for her youthful guide she took,
And Goodness, which no earthly vice could stain,
Dwelt in her mind; she was ne proud I ween or vain.

The sleepless Gout here counts the crowing cocks,
A wolf now gnaws him, now a serpent stings;
Whilst Apoplexy cramm'd Intemperance knocks
Down to the ground at once, as butcher felleth ox.*

CANTO II.

The knight of arts and industry,
And his achievements fair;
That, by this Castle's overthrow,
Secured, and crowned were.

I.

Escaped the castle of the sire of sin,
Ah! where shall I so sweet a dwelling find?
For all around, without, and all within,
Nothing save what delightful was and kind,
Of goodness savouring and a tender mind,
E'er rose to view. But now another strain,
Of doleful note, alas! remains behind;
I now must sing of pleasure turn'd to pain,
And of the false enchanter Indolence complain.

II

Is there no patron to protect the Muse,
And fence for her Parnassus' barren soil
To every labour its reward accrues,
And they are sure of bread who swink and moil;
But a fell tribe the Aonian hive despoil,
As ruthless wasps oft rob the painful bee:
Thus while the laws not guard that noblest toil,
Ne for the Muses other meed decree,
They praised are alone, and starve right merrily.

III.

I care not, Fortune, what thou me deny:
You can not rob me of free Nature's grace;
You can not shut the windows of the sky,
Through which Aurora shows her brightening face;
You can not bar my constant feet to trace
The woods and lawns, by living stream at eve:
Let health my nerves and finer fibres brace,
And I their toys to the great children leave:
Of fancy, reason, virtue, nought can me bereave.

IV.

Come then, my Muse, and raise a bolder song;
Come, lig no more upon the bed of sloth,
Dragging the lazy languid line along,
Fond to begin, but still to finish loath,
Thy half-writ scrolls all eaten by the moth:
Arise, and sing that generous imp of fame,
Who with the sons of softness nobly wroth,
To sweep away this human lumber came,
Or in a chosen few to rouse the slumbering flame.

* The four concluding stanzas were claimed by Doctor Armstrong, and inserted in his Miscellanies.

V.

In Fairy Land there lived a knight of old,
Of feature stern, Selvaggio well yclep'd,
A rough unpolish'd man, robust and bold,
But wondrous poor: he neither sow'd nor reap'd,
Ne stores in summer for cold winter heap'd;
In hunting all his days away he wore;
Now scorch'd by June, now in November steep'd,
Now pinch'd by biting January sore,
He still in woods pursued the libbard and the boar.

VI.

As he one morning, long before the dawn,
Prick'd through the forest to dislodge his prey,
Deep in the winding bosom of a lawn,
With wood wild fringed, he mark'd a taper's ray,
That from the beating rain, and wintry fray
Did to a lonely cot his steps decoy;
There, up to earn the needments of the day,
He found dame Poverty, nor fair nor coy:
Her he compress'd, and fill'd her with a lusty boy.

VII.

Amid the greenwood shade this boy was bred,
And grew at last a knight of muchel fame,
Of active mind and vigorous lustyhed,
The Knight of Arts and Industry by name:
Earth was his bed, the boughs his roof did frame:
He knew no beverage but the flowing stream;
His tasteful well earn'd food the sylvan game,
Or the brown fruit with which the woodlands teem:
The same to him glad summer, or the winter breme.

VIII.

So pass'd his youthful morning, void of care,
Wild as the colts that through the commons run:
For him no tender parents troubled were,
He of the forest seem'd to be the son,
And, certes, had been utterly undone;
But that Minerva pity of him took,
With all the gods that love the rural wonne,
That teach to tame the soil and rule the crook;
He did the sacred Nine disdain a gentle look.

IX.

Of fertile genius him they nurtured well,
In every science, and in every art,
By which mankind the thoughtless brutes excel,
That can or use, or joy, or grace impart,
Disclosing all the powers of head and heart:
Ne were the goodly exercises spared,
That brace the nerves, or make the limbs alert,
And mix elastic force with firmness hard:
Was never knight on ground mote be with him compared.

X.

Sometimes, with early morn, he mounted gay
The hunter steed, exulting o'er the dale,
And drew the roseate breath of orient day;
Sometimes, retiring to the secret vale,
Yclad in steel, and bright with burnish'd mail,
He strain'd the bow, or toss'd the sounding spear,
Or darting on the goal, outstripp'd the gale,
Or wheel'd the chariot in its mid career,
Or strenuous wrestled hard with many a tough compeer.

XI.

At other times he pried through nature's store,
Whate'er she in the ethereal round contains,
Whate'er she hides beneath her verdant floor,
The vegetable and the mineral reigns:
Or else he scann'd the globe, those small domains,
Where restless mortals such a turmoil keep,
Its seas, its floods, its mountains, and its plains;
But more he search'd the mind, and roused from sleep,
Those moral seeds whence we heroic actions reap.

XII.

Nor would he scorn to stoop from high pursuits
Of heavenly truth, and practice what she taught:
Vain is the tree of knowledge without fruits!
Sometimes in hand the spade or plough he caught,
Forth calling all with which boon earth is fraught;
Sometimes he plied the strong mechanic tool,
Or rear'd the fabric from the finest draught;
And oft he put himself to Neptune's school,
Fighting with winds and waves on the vex'd ocean pool.

XIII.

To solace then these rougher toils, he tried
To touch the kindling canvass into life;
With nature his creating pencil vied,
With nature joyous at the mimic strife:
Or, to such shapes as graced Pygmalion's wife
He hew'd the marble; or, with varied fire,
He roused the trumpet, and the martial fife,
Or bad the lute sweet tenderness inspire,
Or verses framed that well might wake Apollo's lyre.

XIV.

Accomplish'd thus, he from the woods issued,
Full of great aims, and bent on bold emprise;
The work, which long he in his breast had brew'd,
Now to perform he ardent did devise;
To wit, a barbarous world to civilize.

Earth was till then a boundless forest wild;
Nought to be seen but savage wood, and skies
No cities nourish'd arts, no culture smiled,
No government, no laws, no gentle manners mild.

XV.

A rugged wight, the worst of brutes, was man:
On his own wretched kind he, ruthless, prey'd:
The strongest still the weakest overran;
In every country mighty robbers sway'd,
And guile and ruffian force were all their trade.
Life was a scene of rapine, want, and wo;
Which this brave knight, in noble anger, made
To swear he would the rascal rout o'erthrow,
For, by the powers divine, it should no more be so!

XVI.

It would exceed the purport of my song
To say how this best sun, from orient climes,
Came beaming life and beauty all along,
Before him chasing indolence and crimes.
Still as he pass'd, the nations he sublimes,
And calls forth arts and virtues with his ray:
Then Egypt, Greece, and Rome their golden times,
Successive, had; but now in ruins gray
They lie, to slavish sloth and tyranny a prey.

XVII.

To crown his toils, Sir Industry then spread
The swelling sail, and made for Britain's coast.
A silvan life till then the natives led,
In the brown shades and green-wood forest lost,
All careless rambling where it liked them most:
Their wealth the wild deer bouncing through the glade;
They lodged at large, and lived at nature's cost;
Save spear and bow, withouten other aid;
Yet not the Roman steel their naked breast dismay'd.

XVIII.

He liked the soil, he liked the clement skies,
He liked the verdant hills and flowery plains.
'Be this my great, my chosen isle, (he cries)
This, whilst my labours Liberty sustains,
This queen of ocean all assault disdains.'
Nor liked he less the genius of the land,
To freedom apt and persevering pains,
Mild to obey, and generous to command,
Temper'd by forming Heaven with kindest firmest hand.

XIX.

Here, by degrees, his master-work arose,
Whatever arts and industry can frame:
Whatever finish'd agriculture knows,
Fair queen of arts! from heaven itself who came
When Eden flourish'd in unspotted fame;

And still with her sweet innocence we find,
And tender peace, and joys without a name,
That, while they ravish, tranquillize the mind:
Nature and art at once, delight and use combin'd.

XX.

Then towns he quicken'd by mechanic arts,
And bade the fervent city glow with toil;
Bade social commerce raise renowned marts,
Join land to land, and marry soil to soil;
Unite the poles, and without bloody spoil
Bring home of either Ind the gorgeous stores;
Or, should despotic rage the world embroil,
Bade tyrants tremble on remotest shores,
While o'er the encircling deep Britannia's thunder roars.

XXI.

The drooping muses then he westward call'd,
From the famed city* by Propontic sea,
What time the Turk the enfeebled Grecian thrall'd;
Thence from their cloister'd walks he set them free,
And brought them to another Castalie,
Where Isis many a famous nursling breeds;
Or where old Cam soft-paces o'er the lea
In pensive mood, and tunes his doric reeds,
The whilst his flocks at large the lonely shepherd feeds.

XXII.

Yet the fine arts were what he finished least.
For why? They are the quintessence of all,
The growth labouring time, and slow increased;
Unless, as seldom chances, it should fall
That mighty patrons of the coy sisters call
Up to the sunshine of uncumber'd ease,
Where no rude care the mounting thought may thrall,
And where they nothing have to do but please:
Ah! gracious God! thou know'st they ask no other fees.

XXIII.

But now, alas! we live too late in time:
Our patrons now e'en grudge that little claim,
Except to such as sleek the soothing rhyme;
And yet, forsooth, they wear Mæcenas' name,
Poor sons of puft-up vanity, not fame.
Unbroken spirits, cheer! still, still remains
The eternal patron, Liberty; whose flame,
While she protects, inspires the noblest strains:
The best and sweetest far, are toil-created gains.

* Constantinople.

XXIV.

When as the knight had framed, in Britain-land,
A matchless form of glorious government,
In which the sovereign laws alone command,
Laws stablish'd by the public free consent,
Whose majesty is to the sceptre lent;
When this great plan, with each dependent art,
Was settled firm, and to his heart's content,
Then sought he from the toilsome scene to part,
And let life's vacant eve breathe quiet through the heart.

XXV.

For this he chose a farm in Deva's vale,
Where his long alleys peep'd upon the main:
In this calm seat he drew the healthful gale,
Here mix'd the chief, the patriot, and the swain.
The happy monarch of his silvan train,
Here, sided by the guardians of the fold,
He walk'd his rounds, and cheer'd his blest domain:
His days, the days of unstain'd nature, roll'd
Replete with peace and joy, like patriarchs of old.

XXVI.

Witness, ye lowing herds, who gave him milk;
Witness, ye flocks, whose woolly vestments far
Exceed soft India's cotton, or her silk;
Witness, with Autumn charged the nodding car,
That homeward came beneath sweet evening's star,
Or of September-moons the radiance mild.
O hide thy head, abominable war!
Of crimes and ruffian idleness the child!
From Heaven this life ysprung, from hell thy glories viled!

XXVII.

Nor from his deep retirement banish'd was
The amusing care of rural industry.
Still, as with grateful change the seasons pass,
New scenes arise, new landscapes strike the eye,
And all the enlivened country beautify:
Gay plains extend where marshes slept before;
O'er recent meads the exulting streamlets fly;
Dark frowning heaths grow bright with Ceres store,
And woods imbrown the steep, or wave along the shore.

XXVIII.

As nearer to his farm you made approach,
He polish'd Nature with a finer hand:
Yet on her beauties durst not art encroach;
'Tis Art's alone these beauties to expand.

In graceful dance immingled, o'er the land,
Pan, Pales, Flora, and Pomona play'd:
Here, too, brisk gales the rude wild common fann'd,
A happy place; where free, and unafraid,
Amid the flowering brakes each coyer creature stray'd.

XXIX.

But in prime vigour what can last for aye?
That soul enfeebling wizard Indolence,
I whilom sung, wrought in his works decay:
Spread far and wide was his cursed influence;
Of public virtue much he dull'd the sense,
E'en much of private; eat our spirit out,
And fed our rank luxurious vices: whence
The land was overlaid with many a lout;
Not, as old fame reports, wise, generous, bold, and stout.

XXX.

A rage of pleasure madden'd every breast,
Down to the lowest lees the ferment ran:
To his licentious wish each must be bless'd,
With joy be fever'd; snatch it as he can.
Thus Vice the standard rear'd; her arrier-ban
Corruption call'd, and loud she gave the word,
'Mind, mind yourselves! why should the vulgar man,
The lacquey be more virtuous than his lord?
Enjoy this span of life! 'tis all the gods afford.'

XXXI.

The tidings reach'd to where, in quiet hall,
The good old knight enjoy'd well earn'd repose:
'Come, come, Sir Knight! thy children on thee call;
Come, save us yet, ere ruin round us close!
The demon Indolence thy toils o'erthrows.'
On this the noble colour stain'd his cheeks,
Indignant, glowing through the whitening snows
Of venerable eld; his eye full speaks
His ardent soul, and from his couch at once he breaks.

XXXII.

'I will, (he cried) so help me, God! destroy
That villain Archimage.'—His page then straight
He to him call'd; a fiery-footed boy,
Benempt Dispatch:—'My steed be at the gate;
My bard attend; quick, bring the net of fate.'
This net was twisted by the sisters three;
Which, when once cast o'er harden'd wretch, too late
Repentance comes: replevy can not be
From the strong iron grasp of vengeful destiny.

XXXIII.

He came, the bard, a little druid wight,
Of wither'd aspect; but his eye was keen,
With sweetness mix'd. In russet brown bedight,
As is his sister* of the copses green,
He kept along, unpromising of mien.
Gross he who judges so. His soul was fair,
Bright as the children of yon azure sheen!
True comeliness, which nothing can impair,
Dwells in the mind: all else is vanity and glare.

XXXIV.

'Come, (quoth the knight) a voice has reach'd mine ear;
The demon Indolence threats overflow
To all that to mankind is good and dear:
Come, Philomelus; let us instant go,
O'erturn his bowers, and lay his castle low.
Those men, those wretched men! who will be slaves,
Must drink a bitter wrathful cup of wo:
But some there be, thy song, as from their graves
Shall raise.' Thrice happy he! who without rigour saves.

XXXV.

Issuing forth, the knight bestrode his steed,
Of ardent bay, and on whose front a star
Shone blazing bright: sprung from the generous breed,
That whirl of active day the rapid car,
He pranced along, disdaining gate or bar.
Meantime, the bard on milk-white palfrey rode;
An honest sober beast, that did not mar
His meditations, but full softly trode:
And much they moralized as thus yfere they yode.

XXXVI.

They talk'd of virtue, and of human bliss,
What else so fit for man to settle well?
And still their long researches met in this,
This Truth of Truths, which nothing can refel
'From virtue's fount the purest joys outwell,
Sweet rills of thought that cheer the conscious soul;
While vice pours forth the troubled streams of hell,
The which, howe'er disguised, at last with dole
Will through the tortured breast the fiery torrent roll.'

XXXVII.

At length it dawn'd, that fatal valley gay,
O'er which high wood-crown'd hills their summits rear:
On the cold height awhile our palmers stay,
And spite even of themselves their senses cheer;

* The Nightingale

Then to the vizard's wonne their steps they steer.
Like a green isle, it broad beneath them spread,
With gardens round, and wandering currents clear,
And tufted groves to shade the meadow-bed,
Sweet airs and song; and without hurry all seem'd glad.

XXXVIII.

'As God shall judge me knight! we must forgive
(The half-enraptured Philomelus cried)
The frail good man deluded here to live,
And in these groves his musing fancy hide.
Ah! nought is pure. It can not be denied,
That virtue still some tincture has of vice,
And vice of virtue. What should then betide,
But that our charity be not too nice?
Come, let us those we can, to real bliss entice.'

XXXIX.

'Ay, sicker, (quoth the knight) all flesh is frail,
To pleasant sin and joyous dalliance bent;
But let not brutish vice of this avail,
And think to 'scape deserved punishment.
Justice were cruel weakly to relent;
From Mercy's self she got her secret glaive:
Grace be to those who can, and will repent;
But penance long, and dreary, to the slave,
Who must in floods of fire his gross foul spirit lave.'

XL.

Thus, holding high discourse, they came to where
The cursed carle was at his wonted trade;
Still tempting heedless men into his snare,
In witching wise, as I before have said.
But when he saw, in goodly geer array'd,
The grave majestic knight approaching nigh,
And by his side the bard so sage and staid,
His countenance fell; yet oft his anxious eye
Mark'd them, like wily fox who roosted cock doth spy.

XLI.

Nathless, with feign'd respect, he bade give back
The rabble rout, and welcomed them full kind;
Struck with the noble twain, they were not slack
His orders to obey, and fall behind.
Then he resumed his song; and unconfined,
Pour'd all his music, ran through all his strings;
With magic dust their eyne he tries to blind,
And virtue's tender airs o'er weakness flings.
What pity base his song who so divinely sings!

XLII.

Elate in thought, he counted them his own,
They listen'd so intent with fix'd delight:
But they instead, as if transmew'd to stone,
Marvel'd he could with such sweet art unite
The lights and shades of manners, wrong and right.
Meantime, the silly crowd the charm devour,
Wide pressing to the gate. Swift on the knight
He darted fierce to drag him to his bower,
Who backening shunn'd his touch, for well he knew its power.

XLIII.

As in throng'd amphitheatre of old,
The wary Retiarius* trapp'd his foe;
E'en so the knight, returning on him bold,
At once involved him in a Net of Wo,
Whereof I mention made not long ago.
Inraged at first, he scorn'd so weak a jail,
And leap'd, and flew, and flounced to and fro;
But when he found that nothing could avail,
He sat him felly down, and gnaw'd his bitter nail.

XLIV.

Alarm'd, the inferior demons of the place
Raised rueful shrieks and hideous yells around;
Black stormy clouds deform'd the welkin's face,
And from beneath was heard a wailing sound,
As of infernal sprights in cavern bound;
A solemn sadness every creature strook,
And lightnings flash'd, and horror rock'd the ground:
Huge crowds on crowds outpour'd, with blemish'd look,
As if on Time's last verge this frame of things had shook.

XLV.

Soon as the short-lived tempest was yspent,
Steam'd from the jaws of vex'd Avernus' hole,
And hush'd the hubbub of the rabblement,
Sir Industry the first calm moment stole:
'There must (he cried) amid so vast a shoal,
Be some who are not tainted at the heart,
Not poison'd quite by this same villain's bowl:
Come then, my bard, thy heavenly fire impart;
Touch soul with soul till forth the latent spirit start.'

XLVI.

The bard obey'd; and taking from his side,
Where it in seemly sort depending hung,
His British harp, its speaking strings he tried
The which with skilful touch he deftly strung,
Till tinkling in clear symphony they rung.
Then, as he felt the Muses come along,
Light o'er the chords his raptured hand he flung,
And play'd a prelude to his rising song:
The whilst, like midnight mute, ten thousands round him throng.

* A gladiator, who made use of a net, which he threw over his adversary.

XLVII.

Thus, ardent, burst his strain,—'Ye hapless race,
Dire labouring here to smother reason's ray,
That lights our Maker's image in our face,
And gives us wide o'er earth unquestion'd sway;
What is the adored Supreme Perfection, say?—
What, but eternal never resting soul,
Almighty Power, and all-directing day;
By whom each atom stirs, the planets roll;
Who fills, surrounds, informs, and agitates the whole.

XLVIII.

'Come, to the beaming God your hearts unfold!
Draw from its fountain life! 'Tis thence alone,
We can excel. Up from unfeeling mould,
To seraphs burning round the Almighty's throne,
Life rising still on life, in higher tone,
Perfection forms, and with perfection bliss.
In universal nature this clear shown,
Not needeth proof: to prove it were, I wis,
To prove the beauteous world excels the brute abyss.

XLIX.

'Is not the field with lively culture green,
A sight more joyous than the dead morass?
Do not the skies, with active ether clean,
And fann'd by sprightly zephyrs, far surpass
The foul November fogs, and slumbrous mass
With which sad Nature veils her drooping face?
Does not the mountain stream, as clear as glass,
Gay-dancing on, the putrid pool disgrace?
The same in all holds true, but chief in human race.

L.

'It was not by vile loitering in ease,
That Greece obtain'd the brighter palm of art;
That soft yet ardent Athens learn'd to please,
To keen the wit, and to sublime the heart,
In all supreme! complete in every part!
It was not thence majestic Rome arose,
And o'er the nations shook her conquering dart:
For sluggard's brow the laurel never grows;
Renown is not the child of indolent Repose.

LI.

'Had unambitious mortals minded nought,
But in loose joy their time to wear away;
Had they alone the lap of dalliance sought,
Pleased on her pillow their dull heads to lay,
Rude nature's state had been our state to-day;
No cities o'er their towery fronts had raised,
No arts had made us opulent and gay;
With brother brutes the human race had grazed;
None e'er had soar'd to fame, none honour'd been, none praised.

LII.

'Great Homer's song had never fired the breast
To thirst of glory, and heroic deeds;
Sweet Maro's muse, sunk in inglorious rest,
Had silent slept amid the Mincian reeds:
The wits of modern time had told their beads,
And monkish legends been their only strains;
Our Milton's Eden had lain wrapt in weeds,
Our Shakspeare strolled and laughed with Warwick swains,
Ne had my master Spenser charm'd his Mulla's plains.

LIII.

'Dumb too had been the sage historic muse,
And perish'd all the sons of ancient fame
Those starry lights of virtue, that diffuse
Through the dark depth of time their vivid flame,
Had all been lost with such as have no name.
Who then had scorn'd his ease for others' good?
Who then had toil'd rapacious men to tame?
Who in the public breach devoted stood,
And for his country's cause been prodigal of blood?

LIV.

'But should to fame your hearts unfeeling be,
If right I read, you pleasure all require:
Then hear how best may be obtain'd this fee,
How best enjoy'd this nature's wide desire.
Toil and be glad! let industry inspire
Into your quicken'd limbs her buoyant breath!
Who does not act is dead; absorpt entire
In miry sloth, no pride, no joy he hath:
O leaden-hearted men, to be in love with death!

LV.

'Ah! what avail the largest gifts of Heaven,
When drooping health and spirits go amiss?
How tasteless then whatever can be given?
Health is the vital principle of bliss,
And exercise of health. In proof of this,
Behold the wretch who slugs his life away,
Soon swallow'd in disease's sad abyss;
While he whom toil has braced, or manly play,
Has light as air each limb, each thought as clear as day.

LVI.

'O who can speak the vigorous joys of health!
Unclogg'd the body, unobscured the mind:
The morning rises gay, with pleasing stealth,
The temperate evening falls serene and kind.
In health the wiser brutes true gladness find.
See! how the younglings frisk along the meads,
As May comes on, and wakes the balmy wind;
Rampant with life, their joy all joy exceeds:
Yet what but high-strung health this dancing pleasaunce breeds?

LVII.

'But here, instead, is foster'd every ill,
Which or distemper'd minds or bodies know.
Come then, my kindred spirits! do not spill
Your talents here: this place is but a show,
Whose charms delude you to the den of wo.
Come, follow me, I will direct you right,
Where pleasure's roses, void of serpents, grow,
Sincere as sweet; come, follow this good knight,
And you will bless the day that brought him to your sight.

LVIII.

'Some he will lead to courts, and some to camps;
To senates some, and public sage debates,
Where, by the solemn gleam of midnight lamps,
The world is poised, and managed mighty states;
To high discovery some, that new creates
The face of earth; some to the thriving mart;
Some to the rural reign, and softer fates;
To the sweet muses some, who raise the heart:
All glory shall be yours, all nature, and all art!

LIX.

'There are, I see, who listen to my lay,
Who wretched sigh for virtue, but despair:
"All may be done, (methinks I hear them say)
E'en death despised by generous actions fair;
All, but for those who to these bowers repair,
Their every power dissolved in luxury,
To quit of torpid sluggishness the lair,
And from the powerful arms of sloth get free:
'Tis rising from the dead—Alas!—it can not be!"

LX.

'Would you then learn to dissipate the band
Of the huge threatening difficulties dire,
That in the weak man's way like lions stand,
His soul appal, and damp his rising fire?
Resolve, resolve, and to be men aspire.
Exert that noblest privilege, alone,
Here to mankind indulged; control desire:
Let god-like reason, from her sovereign throne,
Speak the commanding word "I will!" and it is done.

LXI.

'Heavens! can you then thus waste, in shameful wise,
Your few important days of trial here?
Heirs of eternity! yborn to raise
Through endless states of being, still more near
To bliss approaching, and perfection clear;
Can you renounce a fortune so sublime,
Such glorious hopes, your backward steps to steer,
And roll, with vilest brutes, through mud and slime?
No! no!—Your heaven-touch'd hearts disdain the sordid crime!'

LXII.

'Enough! enough!' they cried—straight, from the crowd,
The better sort on wings of transport fly:
As when amid the lifeless summits proud
Of Alpine cliffs where to the gelid sky
Snows piled on snows in wintry torpor lie,
The rays divine of vernal Phœbus play;
The awaken'd heaps, in streamlets from on high,
Roused into action, lively leap away,
Glad warbling through the vales, in their new being gay.

LXIII.

Not less the life, the vivid joy serene,
That lighted up these new created men,
Than that which wings the exulting spirit clean,
When, just deliver'd from this fleshly den,
It soaring seeks its native skies agen:
How light its essence! how unclogg'd its powers,
Beyond the blazon of my mortal pen!
E'en so we glad forsook these sinful bowers,
E'en such enraptured life, such energy was ours.

LXIV.

But far the greater part, with rage inflamed,
Dire-mutter'd curses, and blasphemed high Jove:
'Ye sons of hate! (they bitterly exclaim'd)
What brought you to this seat of peace and love?
While with kind nature, here amid the grove,
We pass'd the harmless sabbath of our time,
What to disturb it could, fell men, emove
Your barbarous hearts? Is happiness a crime?
Then do the fiends of hell rule in yon Heaven sublime.'

LXV.

'Ye impious wretches, (quoth the knight in wrath)
Your happiness behold!'—Then straight a wand
He waved, an anti-magic power that hath,
Truth from illusive falsehood to command.
Sudden the landscape sinks on every hand;
The pure quick streams are marshy puddles found;
On baleful heaths the grove all blacken'd stand;
And o'er the weedy foul abhorred ground,
Snakes, adders, toads, each loathsome creature crawls around.

LXVI.

And here and there, on trees by lightning scathed,
Unhappy wights who loathed life yhung;
Or, in fresh gore and recent murder bathed,
They weltering lay; or else, infuriate flung
Into the gloomy flood, while ravens sung

The funeral dirge, they down the torrent roll'd:
These, by distemper'd blood to madness stung,
Had doom'd themselves; whence oft, when night control'd
The world, returning hither their sad spirits howl'd.

LXVII.

Meantime a moving scene was open laid;
That lazar-house I whilom in my lay
Depainted have, its horrors deep display'd,
And gave unnumber'd wretches to the day,
Who tossing there in squalid misery lay.
Soon as of sacred light the unwonted smile
Pour'd on these living catacombs its ray,
Through the drear caverns stretching many a mile,
The sick upraised their heads, and dropp'd their woes awhile.

LXVIII.

'O Heaven! (they cried) and do we once more see
Yon blessed sun, and this green earth so fair?
Are we from noisome damps of pesthouse free?
And drink our souls the sweet ethereal air?
O thou! or Knight, or God? who holdest there
That fiend, oh keep him in eternal chains!
But what for us, the children of despair,
Brought to the brink of hell, what hope remains?
Repentance does itself but aggravate our pains.

LXIX.

The gentle Knight, who saw their rueful case,
Let fall adown his silver beard some tears.
"Certes (quoth he) it is not e'en in grace,
To undo the past, and eke your broken years:
Nathless, to nobler worlds repentance rears,
With humble hope, her eye; to her is given
A power the truly contrite heart that cheers;
She quells the brand by which the rocks are riven:
She more than merely softens, she rejoices Heaven.

LXX.

"Then patient bear the sufferings you have earn'd,
And by these sufferings purify the mind;
Let wisdom be by past misconduct learn'd:
Or pious die, with penitence resign'd;
And to a life more happy and refined,
Doubt not, you shall, new creatures, yet arise.
Till then, you may expect in me to find
One who will wipe your sorrow from your eyes,
One who will sooth your pangs, and wing you to the skies."

LXXI.

They silent heard, and pour'd their thanks in tears:
"For you (resumed the knight with sterner tone)
Whose hard dry hearts the obdurate demon sears,
That villain's gifts will cost you many a groan;
In dolorous mansion long you must bemoan
His fatal charms, and weep your stains away;
Till, soft and pure as infant goodness grown,
You feel a perfect change: then, who can say
What grace may yet shine forth in Heaven's eternal day?"

LXXII.

This said, his powerful wand he waved anew:
Instant a glorious angel-train descends,
The Charities, to wit, of rosy hue;
Sweet Love their looks a gentle radiance lends,
And with seraphic flame compassion blends.
At once, delighted, to their charge they fly:
When lo! a goodly hospital ascends
In which they bade each lenient aid be nigh,
That could the sick-bed smooth of that sad company.

LXXIII.

It was a worthy edifying sight,
And gives to human kind peculiar grace,
To see kind hands attending day and night,
With tender ministry from place to place.
Some prop the head; some, from the pallid face
Wipe off the faint cold dews weak nature sheds;
Some reach the healing draught: the whilst, to chase
The fear supreme, around their soften'd beds,
Some holy man by prayer all opening Heaven dispreds.

LXXIV.

Attended by a glad acclaiming train,
Of those he rescued had from gaping hell,
Then turn'd the Knight; and, to his hall again
Soft-pacing, sought of peace the mossy cell:
Yet down his cheeks the gems of pity fell,
To see the helpless wretches that remain'd,
There left through delves and deserts dire to yell;
Amazed, their looks with pale dismay were stain'd,
And spreading wide their hands they meek repentance feigned.

LXXV.

But ah! their scorned day of grace was past:
For (horrible to tell!) a desert wild
Before them stretch'd, bare, comfortless, and vast;
With gibbets, bones, and carcasses defiled

There nor trim field, nor lively culture smiled:
Nor waving shade was seen, nor fountain fair;
But sands abrupt on sands lay loosely piled,
Through which they floundering, toil'd with painful care,
Whilst Phœbus smote them sore, and fired the cloudless air.

LXXVI.

Then, varying to a joyless land of bogs,
The sadden'd country a gray waste appear'd;
Where nought but putrid streams and noisome fogs
For ever hung on drizzly Auster's beard;
Or else the ground, by piercing Caurus sear'd,
Was jagg'd with frost, or heap'd with glazed snow;
Through these extremes a ceaseless round they steer'd,
By cruel fiends still hurried to and fro,
Gaunt Beggary, and Scorn, with many hell-hounds moe.

LXXVII.

The first was with base dunghill rags yclad,
Tainting the gale, in which they flutter'd light;
Of morbid hue his features, sunk and sad;
His hollow eyne shook forth a sickly light;
And o'er his lank jawbone, in piteous plight,
His black rough beard was matted rank and vile;
Direful to see! a heart-appalling sight!
Meantime foul scurf and blotches him defile;
And dogs, where'er he went, still barked all the while.

LXXVIII.

The other was a fell despightful fiend;
Hell holds none worse in baleful bower below:
By pride, and wit, and rage, and rancour, keen'd;
Of man alike, if good or bad, the foe:
With nose upturn'd, he always made a show
As if he smelt some nauseous scent; his eye
Was cold, and keen, like blast from boreal snow;
And taunts he casten forth most bitterly.
Such were the twain that off drove this ungodly fry.

LXXIX.

E'en so through Brentford town, a town of mud,
A herd of bristly swine is prick'd along;
The filthy beasts, that never chew the cud,
Still grunt, and squeak, and sing their troublous song.
And oft they plunge themselves the mire among:
But aye the ruthless driver goads them on,
And aye of barking dogs the bitter throng
Makes them renew their unmelodious moan;
Ne ever find they rest from their unresting fone.

GLOSSARY.

Archimage, the chief, or greatest of magicians and enchanters.
Apaid, paid.
Appal, affright.
Atween, between.
Ay, always.
Bale, sorrow, trouble, misfortune.
Benempt, named.
Blazon, painting, displaying.
Breme, cold, raw.
Carol, to sing songs of joy.
Caucus, the north-east wind.
Certes, certainly.
Dan, a word prefixed to names.
Deftly, skilfully.
Depainted, painted.
Drowsy-head, Drowsiness.
Eath, easy.
Eftsoons, immediately, often, afterwards.
Eke, also.
Fays, fairies.
Gear or *Geer*, furniture, equipage, dress.
Glaive, sword. (Fr.)
Glee, joy, pleasure.
Han, have.
Hight, named, called; and sometimes it is used for *is called*. See stanza vii.
Idless, idleness.
Imp, child or offspring; from the Saxon impan, to graft or plant.
Kest, for cast.
Lad, for led.
Lea, a piece of land, or meadow.
Libbard, leopard.
Lig, to lie.
Losel, a loose idle fellow.
Louting, bowing, bending.
Lithe, loose, lax.
Mell, mingle.
Moe, more.
Moil, to labour.
Mote, might.
Muchel, or *Mochel*, much, great.
Nathless, nevertheless.
Ne, nor.
Needments, necessaries.
Noursling, a child that is nursed.
Noyance, harm.
Prankt, coloured, adorned, gayly.
Perdie, (Fr. par Dieu) an old oath.
Pricked through the forest, rode through the forest.
Sear, dry, burnt up.
Sheen, bright, shining.
Sicker, surely.
Soot, sweet, or sweetly.
Sooth, true, or truth.

Stound, misfortune, pang.
Sweltry, sultry, consuming with heat.
Swink, to labour.
Smackt, savoured.
Thrall, slave.
Transmew'd, transformed.
Vild, vile.
Unkempt, (Lat. incomptus) unadorned.
Ween, to think, be of opinion.
Weet, to know, to weet, to wit.
Whilom, ere-while, formerly.
Wight, man.
Wis, for *Wist*, to know, think, understand.
Wonne, (a noun) dwelling.
Wroke, wreakt.
Yborn, born.
Yblent, or *blent*, blended, mingled.
Yclad, clad.
Ycleped, called, named.
Yfere, together.
Ymolten, melted.
Yode, (preter tense of *yede*) went.

N. B. The letter Y is frequently placed in the beginning of a word, by Spenser, to lengthen it a syllable, and *en* at the end of a word, for the same reason, as *withouten*, *casten*, &c.

Britannia.

—— Et tantas audetis tollere moles?
Quos ego—sed motos præstat componere fluctus.
Post mihi non simili pœna commissa luetis.
Maturate fugam, regique hæc dicite vestro:
Non illi imperium pelagi, sævumque tridentem,
Sed mihi sorte datum. *Virgil.*

AS on the sea-beat shore Britannia sat,
Of her degenerate sons the faded fame,
Deep in her anxious heart, revolving sad:
Bare was her throbbing bosom to the gale,
That, hoarse and hollow, from the bleak surge blew;
Loose flowed her tresses; rent her azure robe.
Hung o'er the deep from her majestic brow
She tore the laurel, and she tore the bay.
Nor ceased the copious grief to bathe her cheek;
Nor ceased her sobs to murmur to the main.
Peace discontented nigh, departing, stretch'd
Her dove-like wings: and War, tho' greatly roused,
Yet mourns his fetter'd hands. While thus the queen
Of nations spoke; and what she said the muse
Recorded, faithful, in unbidden verse.

'E'en not yon sail, that from the sky-mixt wave,
Dawns on the sight, and wafts the Royal Youth,*
A freight of future glory to my shore;
E'en not the flattering view of golden days,
And rising periods yet of bright renown,
Beneath the parents, and their endless line
Through late revolving time, can sooth my rage;
While, unchastised, the insulting Spaniard dares
Infest the trading flood, full of vain war
Despise my navies, and my merchants seize;
As, trusting to false peace, they fearless roam
The world of waters wild; made, by the toil,
And liberal blood of glorious ages, mine:
Nor bursts my sleeping thunder on their head.
Whence this unwonted patience? this weak doubt?
This tame beseeching of rejected peace?
This meek forbearance? this unnative fear?
To generous Britons never known before?
And sail'd my fleets for this; on Indian tides
To float, inactive, with the veering winds?
The mockery of war! while hot disease,
And sloth distemper'd, swept off burning crowds,
For action ardent; and amid the deep,
Inglorious, sunk them in a watery grave.
There now they lie beneath the rolling flood,
Far from their friends, and country, unavenged;
And back the drooping war ship comes again,
Dispirited and thin; her sons ashamed
Thus idly to review their native shore;
With not one glory sparkling in their eye,
One triumph on their tongue. A passenger,
The violated merchant comes along;
That far sought wealth, for which the noxious gale
He drew, and sweat beneath equator suns,
By lawless force detain'd; a force that soon
Would melt away, and every spoil resign,
Were once the British lion heard to roar.
Whence is it that the proud Iberian thus
In their own well asserted element,
Dares rouse to wrath the masters of the main?
Who told him, that the big incumbent war
Would not, ere this, have roll'd his trembling ports
In smoky ruin? and his guilty stores,
Won by the ravage of a butcher'd world,
Yet unatoned, sunk in the swallowing deep,
Or led the glittering prize into the Thames?

* Frederick Prince of Wales, then lately arrived.

'There was a time (Oh let my languid sons
Resume their spirit at the rousing thought!)
When all the pride of Spain, in one dread fleet,
Swell'd o'er the labouring surge; like a whole heaven
Of clouds, wide roll'd before the boundless breeze.
Gaily the splendid armament along
Exultant plough'd, reflecting a red gleam,
As sunk the sun, o'er all the flaming Vast;
Tall, gorgeous, and elate; drunk with the dream
Of easy conquest; while their bloated war,
Stretch'd out from sky to sky, the gather'd force
Of ages held in its capacious womb.
But soon, regardless of the cumbrous pomp,
My dauntless Britons came, a gloomy few,
With tempests black, the goodly scene deform'd,
And laid their glory waste. The bolts of fate
Resistless thunder'd through their yielding sides;
Fierce o'er their beauty blazed the lurid flame;
And seized in horrid grasp, or shatter'd wide,
Amid the mighty waters, deep they sunk.
Then too from every promontory chill,
Rank fen, and cavern where the wild wave works,
I swept confederate winds, and swell'd a storm.
Round the glad isle, snatch'd by the vengeful blast,
The scatter'd remnants drove; on the blind shelve,
And pointed rock, that marks the indented shore,
Relentless dash'd, where loud the northern main
Howls through the fractured Caledonian isles.

'Such were the dawnings of my watery reign;
But since how vast it grew, how absolute,
E'en in those troubled times, when dreadful Blake
Awed angry nations with the British name,
Let every humbled state, let Europe say,
Sustain'd, and balanced, by my naval arm.
Ah, what must those immortal spirits think
Of your poor shifts? Those, for their country's good,
Who faced the blackest danger, knew no fear,
No mean submission, but commanded peace.
Ah, how with indignation must they burn?
(If aught, but joy, can touch ethereal breasts)
With shame? with grief? to see their feeble sons
Shrink from that empire o'er the conquer'd seas,
For which their wisdom plann'd, their councils glow'd,
And their veins bled through many a toiling age.

'Oh, first of human blessings! and supreme!
Fair Peace! how lovely, how delightful thou!
By whose wide tie the kindred sons of men
Like brothers live, in amity combined
And unsuspicious faith; while honest toil
Gives every joy, and to those joys a right,
Which idle, barbarous rapine but usurps.
Pure is thy reign: when, unaccursed by blood,
Nought, save the sweetness of indulgent showers,
Trickling distils into the vernant glebe;
Instead of mangled carcasses, sad-seen,
When the blithe sheaves lie scatter'd o'er the field;
When only shining shares, the crooked knife,
And hooks imprint the vegetable wound;
When the land blushes with the rose alone,
The falling fruitage and the bleeding vine.
Oh, Peace! thou source and soul of social life;
Beneath whose calm inspiring influence,
Science his views enlarges, Art refines,
And swelling Commerce opens all her ports;
Bless'd be the man divine who gives us thee!
Who bids the trumpet hush his horrid clang,
Nor blow the giddy nations into rage;
Who sheaths the murderous blade; the deadly gun
Into the well piled armory returns;
And every vigour, from the work of death,
To grateful industry converting, makes
The country flourish, and the city smile.
Unviolated, him the virgin sings;
And him the smiling mother to her train.
Of him the shepherd, in the peaceful dale,
Chants; and, the treasures of his labour sure,
The husbandman of him, as at the plough,
Or team, he toils. With him the sailor sooths.
Beneath the trembling moon, the midnight wave;
And the full city, warm, from street to street,
And shop to shop, responsive, rings of him.
Nor joys one land alone: his praise extends
Far as the sun rolls the diffusive day;
Far as the breeze can bear the gifts of peace,
Till all the happy nations catch the song.

'What would not, Peace! the patriot bear for thee?
What painful patience. What incessant care?
What mix'd anxiety? What sleepless toil?
E'en from the rash protected what reproach?
For he thy value knows; thy friendship he
To human nature: but the better thou,
The richer of delight, sometimes the more
Inevitable war; when ruffian force
Awakes the fury of an injured state.
E'en the good patient man, whom reason rules,
Roused by bold insult, and injurious rage,
With sharp and sudden check the astonish'd sons
Of violence confounds; firm as his cause,
His bolder heart; in awful justice clad;
His eyes effulging a peculiar fire:
And, as he charges through the prostrate war,
His keen arm teaches faithless men, no more
To dare the sacred vengeance of the just.

'And what, my thoughtless sons, should fire you more
Than when your well earn'd empire of the deep
The least beginning injury receives?
What better cause can call your lightning forth?
Your thunder wake? your dearest life demand?
What better cause, than when your country sees
The sly destruction at her vitals aim'd?
For oh! it much imports you, 'tis your all,
To keep your trade entire, entire the force
And honour of your fleets: o'er that to watch,

E'en with a hand severe, and jealous eye.
In intercourse be gentle, generous, just,
By wisdom polished, and of manners fair;
But on the sea be terrible, untamed,
Unconquerable still: let none escape,
Who shall but aim to touch your glory there.
Is there the man into the lion's den
Who dares intrude, to snatch his young away?
And is a Briton seized? and seized beneath
The slumbering terrors of a British fleet?
Then ardent rise! Oh, great in vengeance rise!
O'erturn the proud, teach rapine to restore:
And as you ride sublimely round the world,
Make every vessel stoop, make every state
At once their welfare and their duty know.
This is your glory: this your wisdom; this
The native power for which you were design'd
By fate, when fate designed the firmest state
That e'er was seated on the subject sea;
A state, alone, where Liberty should live,
In these late times, this evening of mankind,
When Athens, Rome, and Carthage are no more,
The world almost in slavish sloth dissolved.
For this, these rocks around your coast were thrown;
For this, your oaks, peculiar harden'd, shoot
Strong into sturdy growth; for this, your hearts
Swell with a sullen courage, growing still
As danger grows; and strength, and toil for this
Are liberal pour'd o'er all the fervent land.
Then cherish this, this unexpensive power,
Undangerous to the public, ever prompt,
By lavish nature thrust into your hand:
And, unencumber'd with the bulk immense
Of conquest, whence huge empires rose, and fell
Self-crush'd, extend your reign from shore to shore,
Where'er the wind your high behests can blow;
And fix it deep on this eternal base.
For should the sliding fabric once give way,
Soon slacken'd quite, and past recovery broke,
It gathers ruin as it rolls along,
Steep rushing down to that devouring gulf,
Where many a mighty empire buried lies.
And should the big redundant flood of trade,
In which ten thousand thousand labours join
Their several currents, till the boundless tide
Rolls in a radiant deluge o'er the land;
Should this bright stream, the least inflicted, point
Its course another way, o'er other lands
The various treasure would resistless pour,
Ne'er to be won again; its ancient tract
Left a vile channel, desolate, and dead,
With all around a miserable waste.
Not Egypt, were her better heaven, the Nile,
Turn'd in the pride of flow; when o'er his rocks,
And roaring cataracts, beyond the reach
Of dizzy vision piled, in one wide flash
An Ethiopian deluge foams amain;
(Whence wondering fable traced him from the sky)
E'en not that prime of earth, where harvests crowd
On untill'd harvests, all the teeming year,
If of the fat o'erflowing culture robb'd,
Were then a more uncomfortable wild,
Steril, and void; than of her trade deprived,
Britons, your boasted isle: her princes sunk;
Her high built honour moulder'd to the dust;
Unnerved her force; her spirit vanish'd quite;
With rapid wing her riches fled away;
Her unfrequented ports alone the sign
Of what she was; her merchants scatter'd wide;
Her hollow shops shut up; and in her streets,
Her fields, woods, markets, villages, and roads,
The cheerful voice of labour heard no more.

'Oh, let not then waste luxury impair
That manly soul of toil which strings your nerves,
And your own proper happiness creates!
Oh, let not the soft, penetrating plague
Creep on the freeborn mind! and working there,
With the sharp tooth of many a new-form'd want,
Endless, and idle all, eat out the heart
Of liberty; the high conception blast;
The noble sentiment, the impatient scorn
Of base subjection, and the swelling wish
For general good, erasing from the mind:
While nought save narrow selfishness succeeds,
And low design, the sneaking passions all
Let loose, and reigning in the rankled breast.
Induced at last, by scarce perceived degrees,
Sapping the very frame of government,
And life, a total dissolution comes;
Sloth, ignorance, dejection, flattery, fear.
Oppression raging o'er the waste he makes;
The human being almost quite extinct;
And the whole state in broad corruption sinks.
Oh, shun that gulf: that gaping ruin shun!
And countless ages roll it far away
From you, ye heaven-beloved! May liberty,
The light of life! the sun of humankind!
Whence heroes, bards, and patriots borrow flame,
E'en where the keen depressive north descends,
Still spread, exalt, and actuate your powers!
While slavish southern climates beam in vain.
And may a public spirit from the throne,
Where every virtue sits, go copious forth,
Live o'er the land! the finer arts inspire;
Make thoughtful Science raise his pensive head,
Blow the fresh bay, bid Industry rejoice,
And the rough sons of lowest labour smile.
As when, profuse of Spring, the loosen'd West
Lifts up the pining year, and balmy breathes
Youth, life, and love, and beauty, o'er the world.

'But haste we from these melancholy shores,
Nor to deaf winds, and waves, our fruitless plaint
Pour weak; the country claims our active aid;
That let us roam; and where we find a spark
Of public virtue, blow it into flame.
Lo! now, my sons, the sons of freedom! meet

In awful senate; thither let us fly;
Burn in the patriot's thought, flow from his tongue
In fearless truth; myself, transform'd, preside,
And shed the spirit of Britannia round.'

This said; her fleeting form and airy train
Sunk in the gale; and nought but ragged rocks
Rush'd on the broken eye; and nought was heard
But the rough cadence of the dashing wave.

Liberty.

TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS FREDERICK,
PRINCE OF WALES.

SIR—When I reflect upon that ready condescension, that preventing generosity, with which your Royal Highness received the following poem under your protection; I can alone ascribe it to the recommendation and influence of the subject. In you the cause and concerns of Liberty have so zealous a patron, as entitles whatever may have the least tendency to promote them, to the distinction of your favour. And who can entertain this delightful reflection, without feeling a pleasure far superior to that of the fondest author; and of which all true lovers of their country must participate? To behold the noblest dispositions of the prince, and of the patriot, united: an overflowing benevolence, generosity, and candour of heart, joined to an enlightened zeal for Liberty, an intimate persuasion that on it depends the happiness and glory both of king and people: to see these shining out in public virtues, as they have hitherto smiled in all the social lights and private accomplishments of life, is a prospect that can not but inspire a general sentiment of satisfaction and gladness, more easy to be felt than expressed.

If the following attempt to trace Liberty, from the first ages down to her excellent establishment in Great Britain, can at all merit your approbation, and prove an entertainment to your Royal Highness; if it can in any degree answer the dignity of the subject, and of the name under which I presume to shelter it; I have my best reward: particularly as it affords me an opportunity of declaring that I am, with the greatest zeal and respect,

Sir,
Your Royal Highness's
most obedient
and most devoted servant,
JAMES THOMSON.

LIBERTY.

PART I.

ANCIENT AND MODERN ITALY COMPARED.

CONTENTS.

The following Poem is thrown into the form of a Poetical Vision. Its scene, the ruins of ancient Rome. The Goddess of Liberty, who is supposed to speak through the whole, appears, characterized as British Liberty. Gives a view of ancient Italy, and particularly of republican Rome, in all her magnificence and glory. This contrasted by modern Italy; its valleys, mountains, culture, cities, people: the difference appearing strongest in the capital city Rome. The ruins of the great works of Liberty more magnificent than the borrowed pomp of Oppression; and from them revived Sculpture, Painting, and Architecture. The old Romans apostrophized, with regard to the several melancholy changes in Italy: Horace, Tully, and Virgil, with regard to their Tibur, Tusculum, and Naples. That once finest and most ornamented part of Italy, all along the coast of Baiæ, how changed. This desolation of Italy applied to Britain. Address to the Goddess of Liberty, that she would deduce from the first ages, her chief establishments, the description of which constitute the subject of the following parts of this Poem. She assents, and commands what she says to be sung in Britain; whose happiness, arising from freedom, and a limited monarchy, she marks. An immediate Vision attends, and paints her words. Invocation.

O MY lamented Talbot! while with thee
The Muse gay roved the glad Hesperian round,
And drew the inspiring breath of ancient arts;
Ah! little thought she her returning verse
Should sing our darling subject to thy Shade.
And does the mystic veil, from mortal beam,
Involve those eyes where every virtue smiled,
And all thy Father's candid spirit shone?
The light of reason, pure, without a cloud;
Full of the generous heart, the mild regard;
Honour disdaining blemish, cordial faith,
And limpid truth, that looks the very soul.
But to the death of mighty nations turn
My strain; be there absorpt the private tear.
Musing, I lay; warm from the sacred walks,
Where at each step imagination burns:
While scatter'd wide around, awful, and hoar,
Lies, a vast monument, once glorious Rome

The tomb of empire! Ruins! that efface
Whate'er, of finish'd, modern pomp can boast.
Snatch'd by these wonders to that world where thought
Unfetter'd ranges, Fancy's magic hand
Led me anew o'er all the solemn scene,
Still in the mind's pure eye more solemn dress'd:
When straight, methought, the fair majestic Power
Of Liberty appear'd. Not, as of old,
Extended in her hand the cap, and rod,
Whose slave-enlarging touch gave double life:
But her bright temples bound with British oak,
And naval honours nodded on her brow.
Sublime of port: loose o'er her shoulder flow'd
Her sea-green robe, with constellations gay.
An island-goddess now; and her high care
The Queen of Isles, the mistress of the main.
My heart beat filial transport at the sight;
And, as she moved to speak, the awaken'd Muse
Listen'd intense. Awhile she look'd around,
With mournful eye the well known ruins mark'd,
And then, her sighs repressing, thus began:

"Mine are these wonders, all thou seest is mine;
But ah, how changed! the falling poor remains
Of what exalted once the Ausonian shore.
Look back through time: and, rising from the gloom,
Mark the dread scene, that paints whate'er I say.

"The great Republic see! that glow'd, sublime,
With the mix'd freedom of a thousand states;
Raised on the thrones of kings her curule chair,
And by her fasces awed the subject world.
See busy millions quickening all the land,
With cities throng'd, and teeming culture high:
For Nature then smiled on her free-born sons,
And pour'd the plenty that belongs to men.
Behold, the country cheering, villas rise,
In lively prospect; by the secret lapse
Of brooks now lost, and streams renown'd in song;
In Umbria's closing vales, or on the brow
Of her brown hills that breathe the scented gale:
On Baiæ's viny coast; where peaceful seas,
Fann'd by kind zephyrs, ever kiss the shore;
And suns unclouded shine, through purest air:
Or in the spacious neighbourhood of Rome;
Far shining upward to the Sabine hills,
To Anio's roar, and Tibur's olive shade;
To where Prenestè lifts her airy brow:
Or downward spreading to the sunny shore,
Where Alba breathes the freshness of the main.

"See distant mountains leave their valleys dry,
And o'er the proud Arcade their tribute pour,
To lave imperial Rome. For ages laid,
Deep, massy, firm, diverging every way,
With tombs of heroes sacred, see her roads;
By various nations trod, and suppliant kings;
With legions flaming, or with triumph gay.

"Full in the centre of these wondrous works,
The pride of earth! Rome in her glory see!
Behold her demigods, in senate met;
All head to counsel, and all heart to act:
The commonweal inspiring every tongue
With fervent eloquence, unbribed, and bold;
Ere tame Corruption taught the servile herd
To rank obedient to a master's voice.

"Her Forum see, warm, popular, and loud,
In trembling wonder hush'd, when the two Sires,*
As they the private father greatly quell'd,
Stood up the public fathers of the state.
See Justice judging there, in human shape.
Hark! how with freedom's voice it thunders high,
Or in soft murmurs sinks to Tully's tongue.

"Her tribes, her census, see; her generous troops,
Whose pay was glory, and their best reward
Free for their country and for me to die;
Ere mercenary murder grew a trade.

"Mark, as the purple triumph waves along,
The highest pomp and lowest fall of life.

"Her festive games, the school of heroes, see:
Her Circus, ardent with contending youth:
Her streets, her temples, palaces, and baths,
Full of fair forms, of Beauty's eldest born,
And of a people cast in virtue's mould:
While sculpture lives around, and Asian hills
Lend their best stores to heave the pillar'd dome.
All that to Roman strength the softer touch
Of Grecian art can join. But language fails
To paint this sun, this centre of mankind;
Where every virtue, glory, treasure, art,
Attracted strong, in heighten'd lustre meet.

"Need I the contrast mark? unjoyous view!
A land in all, in government and arts,
In virtue, genius, earth, and heaven, reversed,
Who but these far famed ruins to behold,
Proofs of a people, whose heroic aims
Soar'd far above the little selfish sphere
Of doubting modern life; who but inflamed
With classic zeal, these consecrated scenes
Of men and deeds to trace; unhappy land,
Would trust thy wilds, and cities loose of sway?

"Are these the vales, that, once, exulting states
In their warm bosom fed? The mountains these,
On whose high-blooming sides my sons, of old,
I bred to glory? These dejected towns,
Where, mean and sordid, life can scarce subsist,
The scenes of ancient opulence and pomp?

"Come! by whatever sacred name disguised,
Oppression, come! and in thy works rejoice!
See nature's richest plains to putrid fens
Turn'd by thy fury. From their cheerful bounds,
See razed the enlivening village, farm, and seat.
First, rural toil, by thy rapacious hand
Robb'd of his poor reward, resign'd the plough;
And now he dares not turn the noxious glebe.
'Tis thine entire. The lonely swain himself,

* Lucius Junius Brutus, and Virginius.

Who loves at large along the grassy downs
His flocks to pasture, thy drear champaign flies.
Far as the sickening eye can sweep around,
'Tis all one desert, desolate, and gray,
Grazed by the sullen buffalo alone;
And where the rank uncultivated growth
Of rotting ages taints the passing gale.
Beneath the baleful blast the city pines,
Or sinks enfeebled, or infected burns.
Beneath it mourns the solitary road,
Roll'd in rude mazes o'er the abandon'd waste;
While ancient ways, ingulf'd, are seen no more.
"Such thy dire plains, thou self-destroyer! foe
To human kind! thy mountains too, profuse,
Where savage nature blooms, seem their sad plaint
To raise against thy desolating rod.
There on the breezy brow, where thriving states
And famous cities, once, to the pleased sun,
Far other scenes of rising culture spread,
Pale shine thy ragged towns. Neglected round,
Each harvest pines; the livid, lean produce
Of heartless labour: while thy hated joys,
Not proper pleasure, lift the lazy hand.
Better to sink in sloth the woes of life,
Than wake their rage with unavailing toil.
Hence, drooping art almost to nature leaves
The rude unguided year. Thin wave the gifts
Of yellow Ceres, thin the radiant blush
Of orchard reddens in the warmest ray.
To weedy wildness run, no rural wealth
(Such as dictators fed) the garden pours.
Crude the wild olive flows, and foul the vine;
Nor juice Cæcubian, or Falernian, more,
Streams life and joy, save in the Muse's bowl.
Unseconded by art, the spinning race
Draw the bright thread in vain, and idly toil.
In vain, forlorn in wilds, the citron blows;
And flowering plants perfume the desert gale.
Through the vile thorn the tender myrtle twines:
Inglorious droops the laurel, dead to song,
And long a stranger to the hero's brow.
"Nor half thy triumph this: cast, from brute fields,
Into the haunts of men thy ruthless eye.
There buxom Plenty never turns her horn;
The grace and virtue of exterior life,
No clean convenience reigns; e'en sleep itself,
Least delicate of powers, reluctant, there,
Lays on the bed impure his heavy head.
Thy horrid walk! dead, empty, unadorn'd,
See streets whose echoes never know the voice
Of cheerful hurry, commerce many-tongued,
And art mechanic at his various task,
Fervent, employ'd. Mark the desponding race,
Of occupation void, as void of hope;
Hope, the glad ray, glanced from Eternal Good,
That life enlivens, and exalts its powers,
With views of fortune—madness all to them!
By thee relentless seized their better joys,
To the soft aid of cordial airs they fly,
Breathing a kind oblivion o'er their woes,
And love and music melt their souls away.
From feeble Justice, see how rash Revenge,
Trembling, the balance snatches; and the sword,
Fearful himself, to venal ruffians gives.
See where God's altar, nursing murder, stands,
With the red touch of dark assassins stain'd.
"But chief let Rome, the mighty city! speak
The full-exerted genius of thy reign.
Behold her rise amid the lifeless waste,
Expiring nature all corrupted round;
While the lone Tiber, through the desert plain,
Winds his waste stores, and sullen sweeps along.
Patch'd from my fragments, in unsolid pomp,
Mark how the temple glares; and artful dress'd,
Amusive, draws the superstitious train.
Mark how the palace lifts a lying front,
Concealing often, in magnific jail,
Proud want; a deep unanimated gloom!
And oft adjoining to the drear abode
Of misery, whose melancholy walls
Seem its voracious grandeur to reproach.
Within the city bounds the desert see.
See the rank vine o'er subterranean roofs,
Indecent, spread; beneath whose fretted gold
It once, exulting, flow'd. The people mark,
Matchless, while fired by me; to public good
Inexorably firm, just, generous, brave,
Afraid of nothing but unworthy life,
Elate with glory, an heroic soul
Known to the vulgar breast: behold them now
A thin despairing number, all-subdued,
The slaves of slaves, by superstition fool'd,
By vice unmann'd and a licentious rule;
In guile ingenious, and in murder brave;
Such in one land, beneath the same fair clime,
Thy sons, Oppression, are; and such were mine.
"E'en with thy labour'd Pomp, for whose vain show
Deluded thousands starve; all age-begrimed,
Torn, robb'd, and scatter'd in unnumber'd sacks,
And by the tempest of two thousand years
Continual shaken, let my ruins vie.
These roads that yet the Roman hand assert,
Beyond the weak repair of modern toil,
These fractured arches, that the chiding stream
No more delighted hear; these rich remains
Of marbles now unknown, where shines imbibed
Each parent ray; these massy columns, hew'd
From Afric's farthest shore; one granite all,
These obelisks high-towering to the sky,
Mysterious mark'd with dark Egyptian lore;
These endless wonders that this sacred* way
Illumine still, and consecrate to fame;
These fountains, vases, urns, and statues, charged

* Via Sacra.

With the fine stores of art-completing Greece.
Mine is, besides, thy every later boast:
Thy Buonarotis, thy Palladios mine;
And mine the fair designs, which Raphael's* soul
O'er the live canvass, emanating, breathed.
" What would ye say, ye conquerors of earth!
Ye Romans, could you raise the laurel's head;
Could you the country see, by seas of blood,
And the dread toil of ages, won so dear;
Your pride, your triumph, your supreme delight!
For whose defence oft, in the doubtful hour,
You rush'd with rapture down the gulf of fate,
Of death ambitious! till by awful deeds,
Virtues, and courage, that amaze mankind,
The queen of nations rose; possess'd of all
Which nature, art, and glory could bestow:
What would you say, deep in the last abyss
Of slavery, vice, and unambitious want,
Thus to behold her sunk? your crowded plains,
Void of their cities; unadorn'd your hills;
Ungraced your lakes; your ports to ships unknown;
Your lawless floods, and your abandon'd streams;
These could you know; these could you love again?
Thy Tiber, Horace, could it now inspire,
Content, poetic ease, and rural joy,
Soon bursting into song: while through the groves
Of headlong Anio, dashing to the vale,
In many a tortured stream, you mused along?
Yon wild retreat,† where superstition dreams,
Could, Tully, you your Tusculum believe?
And could you deem yon naked hills that form,
Famed in old song, the ship-forsaken bay,‡
Your Formian shore? Once the delight of earth,
Where art and nature, ever smiling, join'd
On the gay land to lavish all their stores.
How changed, how vacant, Virgil, wide around,
Would now your Naples seem? disaster'd less
By Black Vesuvius thundering o'er the coast
His midnight earthquakes, and his mining fires,
Than by despotic rage:§ that inward gnaws
A native foe; a foreign, tears without.
First from your flattered Cæsars this began:
Till, doomed to tyrants an eternal prey,
Thin peopled spreads, at last, the syren plain,‖
That the dire soul of Hannibal disarm'd,
And wrapt in weeds the shore* of Venus lies.
There Baiæ sees no more the joyous throng;
Her bank all beaming with the pride of Rome:
No generous vines now bask along the hills,
Where sport the breezes of the Tyrrhene main:
With baths and temples mix'd, no villas rise;
Nor, art sustain'd amid reluctant waves,
Draw the cool murmurs of the breathing deep:
No spreading ports their sacred arms extend:
No mighty moles the big intrusive storm,
From the calm station, roll resounding back.
An almost total desolation sits,
A dreary stillness saddening o'er the coast;
Where,† when soft suns and tepid winters rose,
Rejoicing crowds inhaled the balm of peace;
Where citied hill to hill reflected blaze;
And where, with Ceres Bacchus wont to hold
A genial strife. Her youthful form, robust,
E'en Nature yields; by fire and earthquake rent:
Whole stately cities in the dark abrupt
Swallow'd at once, or vile in rubbish laid,
A nest for serpents; from the red abyss
New hills, explosive, thrown; the Lucrine lake
A reedy pool: and all to Cuma's point,
The sea recovering his usurp'd domain,
And pour'd triumphant o'er the buried dome
' Hence Britain, learn; my best establish'd, last,
And more than Greece, or Rome, my steady reign;
The land where, King and People equal bound
By guardian laws, my fullest blessings flow;
And where my jealous unsubmitting soul,
The dread of tyrants! burns in every breast,
Learn hence, if such the miserable fate
Of an heroic race, the masters once
Of humankind; what, when deprived of ME,
How grievous must be thine? in spite of climes,
Whose sun-enlivened ether wakes the soul
To higher powers; in spite of happy soils,
That, but by labour's slightest aid impell'd,
With treasures teem to thy cold clime unknown;
If there desponding fail the common arts,
And sustenance of life: could life itself,
Far less a thoughtless tyrant's hollow pomp,
Subsist with thee? against depressing skies,
Join'd to full spread oppression's cloudy brow,
How could thy spirits hold? where vigour find
Forced fruits to tear from their unnative soil?
Or, storing every harvest in thy ports,
To plough the dreadful all producing wave?'
Here paused the Goddess. By the cause assured,
In trembling accents thus I moved my prayer:

* Michael Angelo Buonaroti, Palladio, and Raphael d'Urbino; the three great modern masters in sculpture, architecture, and painting.

† Tusculum is reckoned to have stood at a place now called Grotta Ferrata, a convent of monks.

‡ The bay of Mola, (anciently Formiæ) into which Homer brings Ulysses and his companions. Near Formiæ Cicero had a villa.

§ Naples, then under the Austrian government.

‖ Campagna Felice, adjoining to Capua.

* The coast of Baiæ, which was formerly adorned with the works mentioned in the following lines; and where, amidst many magnificent ruins, those of a temple erected to Venus are still to be seen.

† All along this coast the ancient Romans had their winter retreats; and several populous cities stood

'Oh first, and most benevolent of powers!
Come from eternal splendours here on earth,
Against despotic pride, and rage, and lust,
To shield mankind; to raise them to assert
The native rights and honour of their race:
Teach me thy lowest subject, but in zeal
Yielding to none, the progress of thy reign,
And with a strain from THEE enrich the Muse.
As thee alone she serves, her patron THOU,
And great inspirer be! then will she joy,
Though narrow life her lot, and private shade:
And when her venal voice she barters vile,
Or to thy open or thy secret foes;
May ne'er those sacred raptures touch her more,
By slavish hearts unfelt! and may her song
Sink in oblivion with the nameless crew!
Vermin of state! to thy o'erflowing light
That owe their being, yet betray thy cause.'

Then, condescending kind, the heavenly Power
Return'd:——'What here, suggested by the scene,
I slight unfold, record and sing at home,
In that bless'd isle, where (so we spirits move)
With one quick effort of my will I am.
There Truth, unlicensed, walks; and dares accost
E'en kings themselves, the monarchs of the free!
Fix'd on my rock, there an indulgent race
O'er Britons wield the sceptre of their choice:
And there, to finish what his sires began,
A Prince behold! for me who burns sincere,
E'en with a subject's zeal. He my great work
Will parent-like sustain; and added give
The touch the Graces and the Muses owe.
For Britain's glory swells his panting breast;
And ancient arts he emulous revolves:
His pride to let the smiling heart abroad,
Through clouds of pomp, that but conceal the man;
To please his pleasure; bounty his delight;
And all the soul of Titus dwells in him.'

Hail, glorious theme! but how, alas! shall verse,
From the crude stores of mortal language drawn,
How faint and tedious, sing, what, piercing deep,
The Goddess flash'd at once upon my soul.
For, clear precision all, the tongue of gods
Is harmony itself; to every ear
Familiar known, like light to every eye.
Meantime, disclosing ages, as she spoke,
In long succession pour'd their empires forth;
Scene after scene the human drama spread;
And still the embodied picture rose to sight.

Oh THOU! to whom the Muses owe their flame;
Who bid'st beneath the pole, Parnassus rise,
And Hippocrenè flow: with thy bold ease,
The striking force, the lightning of thy thought,
And thy strong phrase, that rolls profound and clear;
Oh, gracious Goddess! reinspire my song;
While I, to nobler than poetic fame
Aspiring, thy commands to Britons bear.

PART II.

GREECE.

CONTENTS.

Liberty traced from the pastoral ages, and the first uniting of neighbouring families into civil government. The several establishments of Liberty, in Egypt, Persia, Phœnicia, Palestine, slightly touched upon, down to her great establishment in Greece. Geographical description of Greece. Sparta and Athens, the two principal states of Greece, described. Influence of Liberty over all the Grecian states; with regard to their Government, their Politeness, their Virtues, their Arts, and Sciences. The vast superiority it gave them, in point of force and bravery, over the Persians, exemplified by the action of Thermopylæ, the battle of Marathon, and the retreat of the Ten Thousand. Its full exertion, and most beautiful effects in Athens. Liberty the source of free Philosophy. The various schools which took their rise from Socrates. Enumeration of Fine Arts; Eloquence, Poetry, Music, Sculpture, Painting, and Architecture; the effects of Liberty in Greece, and brought to their utmost perfection there. Transition to the modern state of Greece. Why Liberty declined, and was at last entirely lost among the Greeks. Concluding Reflection.

THUS spoke the Goddess of the fearless eye;
And at her voice, renew'd the Vision rose:

'First, in the dawn of time, with eastern swains,
In woods, and tents, and cottages, I lived;
While on from plain to plain they led their flocks,
In search of clearer spring, and fresher field.
These, as increasing families disclosed
The tender state, I taught an equal sway.
Few were offences, properties, and laws.
Beneath the rural portal, palm-o'erspread,
The father senate met. There Justice dealt,
With reason then and equity the same,
Free as the common air, her prompt decree;
Nor yet had stain'd her sword with subjects' blood.
The simpler arts were all their simple wants
Had urged to light. But instant, these supplied,
Another set of fonder wants arose,
And other arts with them of finer aim;
Till, from refining want to want impell'd,
The mind by thinking push'd her latent powers,
And life began to glow, and arts to shine.

'At first, on brutes alone the rustic war
Launch'd the rude spear; swift, as he glared along,
On the grim lion, or the robber wolf.
For then young sportive life was void of toil,
Demanding little, and with little pleased:
But when to manhood grown, and endless joys,
Led on by equal toils, the bosom fired;
Lewd lazy rapine broke primeval peace,
And, hid in caves and idle forests drear,
From the lone pilgrim, and the wandering swain
Seized what he durst not earn. Then brother's blood
First, horrid, smoked on the polluted skies.
Awful in justice, then the burning youth,

Led by their temper'd sires, on lawless men,
The last worst monsters of the shaggy wood,
Turn'd the keen arrow, and the sharpen'd spear.
Then war grew glorious. Heroes then arose;
Who, scorning coward self, for others lived,
Toil'd for their ease, and for their safety bled.
West, with the living day, to Greece I came:
Earth smiled beneath my beam: the Muse before
Sonorous flew, that low till then in woods
Had tuned the reed, and sigh'd the shepherd's pain;
But now, to sing heroic deeds, she swell'd
A nobler note, and bade the banquet burn.
'For Greece my sons of Egypt I forsook;
A boastful race, that in the vain abyss
Of fabling ages loved to lose their source,
And with their river traced it from the skies.
While there my laws alone despotic reign'd,
And king, as well as people, proud obey'd;
I taught them science, virtue, wisdom, arts;
By poets, sages, legislators sought;
The school of polish'd life, and human kind.
But when mysterious Superstition came,
And, with her Civil Sister* leagued, involved
In studied darkness the desponding mind;
Then Tyrant Power the righteous scourge unloosed:
For yielded reason speaks the soul a slave.
Instead of useful works, like nature's, great,
Enormous, cruel wonders crush'd the land;
And round a tyrant's tomb,† who none deserved,
For one vile carcass perish'd countless lives.
Then the great Dragon,‡ couch'd amid his floods,
Swell'd his fierce heart, and cried, "This flood is mine,
'Tis I that bid it flow." But, undeceived,
His frenzy soon the proud blasphemer felt;
Felt that, without my fertilizing power,
Suns lost their force, and Niles o'erflow'd in vain.
Nought could retard me: nor the frugal state
Of rising Persia, sober in extreme,
Beyond the pitch of man, and thence reversed
Into luxurious waste: nor yet the ports
Of old Phœnicia; first for letters famed,
That paint the voice, and silent speak to sight;
Of arts prime source, and guardian! by fair stars,
First tempted out into the lonely deep;
To whom I first disclosed mechanic arts,
The winds to conquer, to subdue the waves,
With all the peaceful power of ruling trade;
Earnest of Britain. Nor by these retain'd;
Nor by the neighbouring land, whose palmy shore
The silver Jordan laves. Before me lay
The promised Land of Arts, and urged my flight.
'Hail, Nature's utmost boast! unrival'd Greece!
My fairest reign! where every power benign
Conspired to blow the flower of human kind,
And lavish'd all that genius can inspire.
Clear, sunny climates, by the breezy main,
Ionian or Ægean, temper'd kind:
Light, airy soils: a country rich, and gay
Broke into hills with balmy odours crown'd,
And, bright with purple harvest, joyous vales:
Mountains, and streams, where verse spontaneous flow'd;
Whence deem'd by wondering men the seat of gods,
And still the mountains and the streams of song.
All that boon Nature could luxuriant pour
Of high materials, and my restless Arts
Frame into finish'd life. How many states,
And clustering towns, and monuments of fame,
And scenes of glorious deeds, in little bounds?
From the rough tract of bending mountains, beat
By Adria's here, there by Ægean waves;
To where the deep adorning Cyclade Isles
In shining prospect rise, and on the shore
Of farthest Crete resounds the Libyan main.
'O'er all two rival cities rear'd the brow,
And balanced all. Spread on Eurotas' bank,
Amid a circle of soft rising hills,
The patient Sparta one: the sober, hard,
And man-subduing city; which no shape
Of pain could conquer, nor of pleasure charm.
Lycurgus there built, on the solid base
Of equal life, so well a temper'd state;
Where mix'd each government, in such just poise;
Each power so checking, and supporting each;
That firm for ages, and unmoved, it stood,
The fort of Greece! without one giddy hour,
One shock of faction, or of party rage.
For, drain'd the springs of wealth, Corruption there
Lay wither'd at the root. Thrice happy land!
Had not neglected art, with weedy vice
Confounded, sunk. But if Athenian arts
Loved not the soil; yet there the calm abode
Of wisdom, virtue, philosophic ease,
Of manly sense and wit, in frugal phrase
Confined, and press'd into Laconic force.
There too, by rooting thence still treacherous self,
The Public and the Private grew the same.
The children of the nursing Public all,
And at its table fed; for that they toil'd,
For that they lived entire, and even for that
The tender mother urged her son to die.
'Of softer genius, but not less intent
To seize the palm of empire, Athens rose.
Where, with bright marbles big and future pomp,
Hymettus* spread, amid the scented sky,
His thymy treasures to the labouring bee,
And to botanic hand the stores of health:
Wrapt in a soul-attenuating clime,

* Civil Tyranny. † The Pyramids.
‡ The Tyrants of Egypt.

* A mountain near Athens.

Between Ilissus and Cephissus* glow'd
This hive of science, shedding sweets divine,
Of active arts, and animated arms.
There, passionate for me, an easy moved,
A quick, refined, a delicate, humane,
Enlighten'd people reign'd. Oft on the brink
Of ruin, hurried by the charm of speech,
Inforcing hasty counsel immature,
Totter'd the rash Democracy; unpoised,
And by the rage devour'd, that ever tears
A populace unequal; part too rich,
And part or fierce with want or abject grown.
Solon at last, their mild restorer, rose:
Allay'd the tempest; to the calm of laws
Reduced the settling whole; and, with the weight
Which the two senates† to the public lent,
As with an anchor fix'd the driving state.
'Nor was my forming care to these confin'd.
For emulation through the whole I pour'd,
Noble contention! who should most excel
In government well poised, adjusted best
To public weal: in countries cultured high:
In ornamented towns, where order reigns,
Free social life, and polish'd manners fair
In exercise, and arms; arms only drawn
For common Greece, to quell the Persian pride:
In moral science, and in graceful arts.
Hence, as for glory peacefully they strove,
The prize grew greater, and the prize of all.
By contest brighten'd, hence the radiant youth,
Pour'd every beam; by generous pride inflamed,
Felt every ardour burn: their great reward
The verdant wreath, which sounding Pisa‡ gave.
'Hence flourish'd Greece; and hence a race of men,
As gods by conscious future times adored:
In whom each virtue wore a smiling air,
Each science shed o'er life a friendly light,
Each art was nature. Spartan valour hence,
At the famed pass,§ firm as an isthmus stood;
And the whole eastern ocean, waving far
As eye could dart its vision, nobly check'd.
While in extended battle, at the field
Of Marathon, my keen Athenians drove
Before their ardent band a host of slaves.
'Hence through the continent ten thousand Greeks
Urged a retreat, whose glory not the prime
Of victories can reach. Deserts, in vain,
Opposed their course; and hostile lands, unknown;
And deep rapacious floods, dire bank'd with death
And mountains, in whose jaws destruction grinn'd;
Hunger, and toil; Armenian snows, and storms;
And circling myriads still of barbarous foes.
Greece in their view, and glory yet untouch'd,
Their steady column pierced the scattering herds,
Which a whole empire pour'd; and held its way
Triumphant, by the sage-exalted Chief*
Fired and sustain'd. Oh light and force of mind,
Almost almighty in severe extremes!
The sea at last from Colchian mountains seen,
Kind-hearted transport round their captains threw
The soldiers' fond embrace; o'erflow'd their eyes
With tender floods, and loosed the general voice
To cries resounding loud—"The sea! The sea!"
'In Attic bounds hence heroes, sages, wits,
Shone thick as stars, the milky way of Greece!
And though gay wit, and pleasing grace was theirs,
All the soft modes of elegance, and ease;
Yet was not courage less, the patient touch
Of toiling art, and disquisition deep.
'My spirit pours a vigour through the soul,
The unfetter'd thought with energy inspires,
Invincible in arts, in the bright field
Of nobler Science, as in that of Arms.
Athenians thus not less intrepid burst
The bonds of tyrant darkness, than they spurn'd
The Persian chains: while through the city full
Of mirthful quarrel and of witty war,
Incessant struggled taste refining taste,
And friendly free discussion, calling forth
From the fair jewel Truth its latent ray.
O'er all shone out the great Athenian Sage,†
And Father of Philosophy; the sun,
From whose white blaze emerged, each various sect
Took various tints, but with diminish'd beam.
Tutor of Athens! he, in every street,
Dealt priceless treasure: goodness his delight,
Wisdom his wealth, and glory his reward.
Deep through the human heart, with playful art,
His simple question stole: as into truth,
And serious deeds, he smiled the laughing race;
Taught moral happy life, whate'er can bless,
Or grace mankind; and what he taught he was.
Compounded high, though plain, his doctrine broke
In different Schools: the bold poetic phrase
Of figured Plato; Xenophon's pure strain,
Like the clear brook that steals along the vale;
Dissecting truth, the Stagyrite's keen eye;
The exalted Stoic pride; the Cynic sneer;
The slow-consenting Academic doubt;
And, joining bliss to virtue, the glad ease
Of Epicurus, seldom understood
They, ever candid, reason still opposed
To reason; and, since virtue was their aim,
Each by sure practice tried to prove his way

* Two rivers, betwixt which Athens was situated.

† The Areopagus, or Supreme Court of Judicature, which Solon reformed and improved: and the council of Four Hundred, by him instituted. In this council all affairs of state were deliberated, before they came to be voted in the assembly of the people.

‡ Or Olympia, the city where the Olympic games were celebrated.

§ The Straits of Thermopylæ.

* Xenophon. † Socrates.

The best. Then stood untouch'd the solid base
Of Liberty, the liberty of mind:
For systems yet, and soul-enslaving creeds,
Slept with the monsters of succeeding times.
From priestly darkness sprung the enlightening arts
Of fire, and sword, and rage, and horrid names.
'O Greece! thou sapient nurse of finer arts!
Which to bright science blooming fancy bore;
Be this thy praise, that thou, and thou alone,
In these hast led the way, in these excell'd,
Crown'd with the laurel of assenting Time.
'In thy full language, speaking mighty things;
Like a clear torrent close, or else diffused
A broad majestic stream, and rolling on
Through all the winding harmony of sound:
In it the power of Eloquence, at large,
Breathed the persuasive or pathetic soul;
Still'd by degrees the democratic storm,
Or bade it threatening rise, and tyrants shook,
Flush'd at the head of their victorious troops.
In it the Muse, her fury never quench'd,
By mean unyielding phrase, or jarring sound,
Her unconfined divinity display'd;
And, still harmonious, form'd it to her will:
Or soft depress'd it to the shepherd's moan,
Or raised it swelling to the tongue of gods.
'Heroic song was thine; the Fountain Bard,*
Whence each poetic stream derives its course.
Thine the dread moral scene, thy chief delight!
Where idle Fancy durst not fix her voice,
When Reason spoke august; the fervent heart
Or plain'd, or storm'd; and in the impassioned man,
Concealing art with art, the poet sunk.
This potent school of manners, but when left
To loose neglect, a land-corrupting plague,
Was not unworthy deem'd of public care,
And boundless cost, by thee; whose every son,
E'en last mechanic, the true taste possess'd
Of what had flavour to the nourish'd soul.
'The sweet enforcer of the poet's strain,
Thine was the meaning music of the heart.
Not the vain trill, that, void of passion, runs
In giddy mazes, tickling idle ears;
But that deep-searching voice, and artful hand,
To which respondent shakes the varied soul.
'Thy fair ideas, thy delightful forms,
By Love imagined, by the Graces touch'd,
The boast of well pleased Nature! Sculpture seized,
And bade them ever smile in Parian stone.
Selecting Beauty's choice, and that again
Exalting, blending in a perfect whole,
Thy workmen left e'en Nature's self behind.
From those far different, whose prolific hand
Peoples a nation; they for years on years,

* Homer.

By the cool touches of judicious toil,
Their rapid genius curbing, pour'd it all
Through the live features of one breathing stone.
There, beaming full, it shone; expressing gods:
Jove's awful brow, Apollo's air divine,
The fierce atrocious frown of sinewed Mars,
Or the sly graces of the Cyprian Queen.
Minutely perfect all! Each dimple sunk,
And every muscle swell'd, as nature taught.
In tresses, braided gay, the marble waved;
Flow'd in loose robes, or thin transparent veils;
Sprung into motion; softened into flesh;
Was fired to passion, or refined to soul.
'Nor less thy pencil, with creative touch,
Shed mimic life, when all thy brightest dames,
Assembled, Zeuxis in his Helen mix'd.
And when Apelles, who peculiar knew
To give a grace that more than mortal smiled,
The soul of beauty! call'd the Queen of Love,
Fresh from the billows, blushing orient charms.
E'en such enchantment then thy pencil pour'd,
That cruel-thoughted War the impatient torch
Dash'd to the ground; and, rather than destroy
The patriot picture,* let the city scape.
"First, elder Sculpture taught her sister art
Correct design; where great ideas shone,
And in the secret trace expression spoke:
Taught her the graceful attitude; the turn,
And beauteous airs of head; the native act,
Or bold, or easy; and, cast free behind,
The swelling mantle's well adjusted flow.
Then the bright Muse, their elder sister, came;
And bade her follow where she led the way:
Bade earth, and sea, and air, in colours rise;
And copious action on the canvass glow.
Gave her gay Fable; spread Inventions's store;
Enlarged her view; taught composition high,
And just arrangement, circling round one point,
That starts to sight, binds and commands the whole.
Caught from the heavenly Muse a nobler aim,
And scorning the soft trade of mere delight,
O'er all thy temples, porticos, and schools,
Heroic deeds she traced, and warm display'd
Each moral beauty to the ravish'd eye.
There, as the imagined presence of the god
Aroused the mind, or vacant hours induced
Calm contemplation, or assembled youth
Burn'd in ambitious circle round the sage,
The living lesson stole into the heart,
With more prevailing force than dwells in words.
These rouse to glory; while, to rural life,
The softer canvass oft reposed the soul.
There gaily broke the sun-illumined cloud;

* When Demetrius besieged Rhodes, and could have reduced the city, by setting fire to that quarter of it where stood the house of the celebrated Protogenes; he chose rather to raise the siege, than hazard the burning of a famous picture called Jasylus, the masterpiece of that painter.

The lessening prospect, and the mountain blue,
Vanish'd in air; the precipice frown'd, dire;
White, down the rock, the rushing torrent dash'd;
The sun shone, trembling, o'er the distant main;
The tempest foam'd, immense; the driving storm
Sadden'd the skies, and, from the doubling gloom,
On the scathed oak the ragged lightning fell;
In closing shades, and where the current strays,
With Peace, and Love, and innocence around,
Piped the lone shepherd to his feeding flock:
Round happy parents smiled their younger selves;
And friends conversed, by death divided long.
"To public virtue thus the smiling arts,
Unblemish'd handmaids, served; the Graces they
To dress this fairest Venus. Thus revered,
And placed beyond the reach of sordid care,
The high awarders of immortal fame,
Alone for glory thy great masters strove;
Courted by kings, and by contending states
Assumed the boasted honour of their birth.
"In architecture too thy rank supreme!
That art where most magnificent appears
The little builder man; by thee refined,
And, smiling high, to full perfection brought.
Such thy sure rules, that Goths of every age,
Who scorn'd their aid, have only loaded earth
With labour'd heavy monuments of shame.
Not those gay domes that o'er thy splendid shore
Shot, all proportion, up. First unadorn'd,
And nobly plain, the manly Doric rose;
The Ionic then, with decent matron grace,
Her airy pillar heaved; luxuriant last,
The rich Corinthian spread her wanton wreath.
The whole so measured true, so lessen'd off
By fine proportion, that the marble pile,
Form'd to repel the still or stormy waste
Of rolling ages, light as fabrics look'd
That from the magic wand aërial rise.
"These were the wonders that illumined Greece,
From end to end"——Here interrupting warm,
"Where are they now? (I cried) say, goddess, where?
And what the land, thy darling thus of old?"
"Sunk! (she resumed) deep in the kindred gloom
Of superstition, and of slavery, sunk!
No glory now can touch their hearts, benumb'd
By loose dejected sloth and servile fear:
No science pierce the darkness of their minds;
No nobler art the quick ambitious soul
Of imitation in their breast awake.
E'en to supply the needful arts of life,
Mechanic toil denies the hopeless hand.
Scarce any trace remaining, vestige gray,
Or nodding column on the desert shore,
To point where Corinth, or where Athens stood.
A faithless land of violence, and death!
Where commerce parleys, dubious, on the shore;
And his wild impulse curious search restrains,
Afraid to trust the inhospitable clime.
Neglected nature fails; in sordid want
Sunk and debased, their beauty beams no more.
The sun himself seems, angry, to regard,
Of light unworthy, the degenerate race;
And fires them oft with pestilential rays:
While earth, blue poison steaming on the skies,
Indignant, shakes them from her troubled sides.
But as from man to man, Fate's first decree,
Impartial death the tide of riches rolls,
So states must die and Liberty go round.
"Fierce was the stand, ere Virtue, Valour, Arts,
And the soul fired by me (that often, stung
With thoughts of better times and old renown,
From hydra-tyrants tried to clear the land)
Lay quite extinct in Greece, their works effaced
And gross o'er all unfeeling bondage spread.
Sooner I moved my much reluctant flight,
Poised on the doubtful wing: when Greece with Greece
Embroil'd in foul contention fought no more
For common glory, and for common weal:
But false to Freedom, sought to quell the free;
Broke the firm band of Peace, and sacred Love,
That lent the whole irrefragable force;
And, as around the partial trophy blush'd,
Prepared the way for total overthrow.
Then to the Persian power, whose pride they scorn'd,
When Xerxes pour'd his millions o'er the land,
Sparta, by turns, and Athens, vilely sued;
Sued to be venal parricides, to spill
Their country's bravest blood, and on themselves
To turn their matchless mercenary arms.
Peaceful in Susa, then, sat the Great King;*
And by the trick of treaties, the still waste
Of sly corruption, and barbaric gold,
Effected what his steel could ne'er perform.
Profuse he gave them the luxurious draught,
Inflaming all the land: unbalanced wide
Their tottering states; their wild assemblies ruled,
As the winds turn at every blast the seas:
And by their listed orators, whose breath
Still with a factious storm infested Greece,
Roused them to civil war, or dash'd them down
To sordid peace—Peace!† that, when Sparta shook
Astonish'd Artaxerxes on his throne,
Gave up, fair-spread o'er Asia's sunny shore,
Their kindred cities to perpetual chains.
What could so base, so infamous a thought
In Spartan hearts inspire? Jealous, they saw

* So the kings of Persia were called by the Greeks.

† The peace made by Antalcidas, the Lacedemonian admiral, with the Persians; by which the Lacedemonians abandoned all the Greeks established in the lesser Asia, to the dominion of the King of Persia.

Respiring Athens* rear again her walls:
And the pale fury fired them, once again
To crush this rival city to the dust.
For now no more the noble social soul
Of Liberty my families combined;
But by short views, and selfish passions, broke,
Dire as when friends are rankled into foes,
They mix'd severe, and waged eternal war:
Nor felt they, furious, their exhausted force;
Nor, with false glory, discord, madness blind,
Saw how the blackening storm from Thracia came.
Long years roll'd on,† by many a battle stain'd,
The blush and boast of Fame! where courage, art,
And military glory shone supreme:
But let detesting ages, from the scene
Of Greece self-mangled, turn the sickening eye.
At last, when bleeding from a thousand wounds,
She felt her spirits fail, and in the dust
Her latest heroes, Nicias, Conon, lay,
Agesilaus, and the Theban friends:‡
The Macedonian vulture mark'd his time,
By the dire scent of Cheronæa§ lured,
And, fierce descending, seized his hapless prey.

"Thus tame submitted to the victor's yoke
Greece, once the gay, the turbulent, the bold;
For every grace, and muse, and science born;
With arts of War, of Government, elate;
To tyrants dreadful, dreadful to the best;
Whom I myself could scarcely rule: and thus
The Persian fetters, that inthrall'd the mind,
Were turn'd to formal and apparent chains.

"Unless Corruption first deject the pride,
And guardian vigour of the free-born soul,
All crude attempts of violence are vain;
For firm within, and while at heart untouch'd,
Ne'er yet by force was freedom overcome.
But soon as Independence stoops the head,
To Vice enslaved, and vice-created wants;
Then to some foul corrupting hand, whose waste
These heighten'd wants with fatal bounty feeds:
From man to man the slackening ruin runs,
Till the whole state unnerved in Slavery sinks.'

PART III.

ROME.

CONTENTS.

As this part contains a description of the establishment of Liberty in Rome, it begins with a view of the Grecian Colonies settled in the southern parts of Italy, which with Sicily constituted the Great Greece of the Ancients. With these colonies, the Spirit of Liberty and of Republics, spreads over Italy. Transition to Pythagoras and his philosophy, which he taught through those free states and cities. Amidst the many small Republics in Italy, Rome the destined seat of Liberty. Her establishment there dated from the expulsion of the Tarquins. How differing from that in Greece. Reference to a view of the Roman Republic given in the First Part of this Poem: to mark its Rise and Fall the peculiar purport of this. During its first ages, the greatest force of Liberty and Virtue exerted. The source whence derived the Heroic Virtues of the Romans. Enumeration of these Virtues. Thence their security at home; their glory, success, and empire abroad. Bounds of the Roman empire geographically described. The states of Greece restored to Liberty, by Titus Quintus Flaminius, the highest instance of public generosity and beneficence. The loss of Liberty in Rome. Its causes, progress, and completion in the death of Brutus. Rome under the emperors. From Rome the Goddess of Liberty goes among the Northern Nations; where, by infusing into them her Spirit and general principles, she lays the groundwork of her future establishments; sends them in vengeance on the Roman empire, now totally enslaved; and then, with Arts and Sciences in her train, quits earth during the dark ages. The celestial regions, to which Liberty retired, not proper to be opened to the view of mortals.

HERE melting mixed with air the ideal forms
That painted still whate'er the goddess sung.
Then I, impatient.—'From extinguish'd Greece,
To what new region stream'd the Human Day?'
She softly sighing, as when Zephyr leaves,
Resign'd to Boreas, the declining year,
Resumed.—'Indignant, these last scenes I fled:*
And long ere then, Leucadia's cloudy cliff,
And the Ceraunian hills behind me thrown,
All Latium stood aroused. Ages before,
Great mother of republics! Greece had pour'd,
Swarm after swarm, her ardent youth around.
On Asia, Afric, Sicily, they stoop'd,
But chief on fair Hesperia's winding shore;
Where, from Laciniumt to Etrurian vales,
They roll'd increasing colonies along,
And lent materials for my Roman reign.
With them my spirit spread; and numerous states,
And cities rose, on Grecian models formed;
As its parental policy and arts
Each had imbibed. Besides, to each assign'd
A guardian Genius, o'er the public weal,
Kept an unclosing eye; tried to sustain,
Or more sublime, the soul infused by me:
And strong the battle rose, with various wave,
Against the tyrant demons of the land.
Thus they their little wars and triumphs knew;
Their flows of fortune, and receding times,
But almost all below the proud regard
Of story vow'd to Rome, on deeds intent
That truth beyond the flight of Fable bore.
'Not so the Samian sage;‡ to him belongs
The brightest witness of recording Fame.
For these free states his native isle§ forsook,

* Athens had been dismantled by the Lacedemonians, at the end of the first Peloponnesian war, and was at this time restored by Conon to its former splendour.

† The Peloponnesian war.

‡ Pelopidas and Epaminondas.

§ The battle of Cheronæa, in which Philip of Macedon utterly defeated the Greeks.

* The last struggles of Liberty in Greece.

† A promontory in Calabria.

‡ Pythagoras.

§ Samos, over which then reigned the tyrant Polycrates.

And a vain tyrant's transitory smile,
He sought Crotona's pure salubrious air;
And through Great Greece* his gentle wisdom taught;
Wisdom that calm'd for listening years† the mind,
Nor ever heard amid the storm of zeal.
His mental eye first launch'd into the deeps
Of boundless ether; where unnumber'd orbs,
Myriads on myriads, through the pathless sky
Unerring roll, and wind their steady way.
There he the full consenting choir beheld;
There first discern'd the secret band of love,
The kind attraction that to central suns
Binds circling earths, and world with world unites.
Instructed thence, he great ideas form'd
Of the whole-moving all-informing God,
The Sun of beings! beaming unconfined
Light, life, and love, and ever active power:
Whom nought can image, and who best approves
The silent worship of the moral heart,
That joys in bountcous Heaven, and spreads the joy.
Nor scorn'd the soaring sage to stoop to life,
And bound his season to the sphere of man.
He gave the four yet reigning virtues‡ name;
Inspired the study of the finer arts,
That civilize mankind, and laws devised
Where with enlightened justice mercy mix'd.
He e'en into his tender system, took
Whatever shares the brotherhood of life:
He taught that life's indissoluble flame,
From brute to man, and man to brute again,
For ever shifting, runs the eternal round;
Thence tried against the blood-polluted meal,
And limbs yet quivering with some kindred soul,
To turn the human heart. Delightful truth!
Had he beheld the living chain ascend,
And not a circling form, but rising whole.

'Amid these small republics one arose
On yellow Tiber's bank, almighty Rome,
Fated for me. A nobler spirit warm'd
Her sons; and, roused by tyrants, nobler still
It burn'd in Brutus; the proud Tarquins chased,
With all their crimes; bade radiant eras rise,
And the long honours of the Consul-line.

'Here, from the fairer, not the greater, plan
Of Greece I varied; whose unmixing states,
By the keen soul of emulation pierced,
Long waged alone the bloodless war of arts,
And their best empire gain'd. But to diffuse
O'er men an empire was my purpose now:
To let my martial majesty abroad;
Into the vortex of one state to draw
The whole mix'd force, and liberty, on earth;
To conquer tyrants, and set nations free.

'Already have I given, with flying touch,
A broken view of this my amplest reign.
Now, while its first, last, periods you survey,
Mark how it labouring rose, and rapid fell.

'When Rome, in noon-tide empire grasp'd the world,
And, soon as her resistless legions shone,
The nations stoop'd around; though then appear'd
Her grandeur most; yet in her dawn of power,
By many a jealous equal people press'd,
Then was the toil, the mighty struggle then;
Then for each Roman I a hero told;
And every passing sun, and Latian scene,
Saw patriot virtues then, and awful deeds,
That or surpass the faith of modern times,
Or, if believed, with sacred horror strike.

'For then to prove my most exalted power,
I to the point of full perfection push'd,
To fondness and enthusiastic zeal,
The great, the reigning passion of the free.
That godlike passion! which, the bounds of self
Divinely bursting, the whole public takes
Into the heart, enlarged, and burning high
With the mix'd ardour of unnumber'd selves;
Of all who safe beneath the voted laws
Of the same parent state, fraternal, live.
From this kind sun of moral nature flow'd
Virtues, that shine the light of humankind,
And, ray'd through story, warm remotest time.
These virtues too, reflected to their source,
Increased its flame. The social charm went round,
The fair idea, more attractive still,
As more by virtue mark'd; till Romans, all
One band of friends, unconquerable grew.

'Hence, when their country raised her plaintive voice,
The voice of pleading Nature was not heard;
And in their hearts the fathers throbb'd no more;
Stern to themselves, but gentle to the whole.
Hence sweeten'd Pain, the luxury of toil;
Patience, that baffled fortune's utmost rage;
High-minded Hope, which at the lowest ebb,
When Brennus conquer'd, and when Cannæ bled,
The bravest impulse felt, and scorn'd despair.
Hence Moderation a new conquest gain'd:
As on the vanquish'd, like descending heaven,
Their dewy mercy dropp'd, the bounty beam'd,
And by the labouring hand were crowns bestow'd.
Fruitful of men, hence hard laborious life,
Which no fatigue can quell, no season pierce.
Hence, Independence, with his little pleased
Serene, and self-sufficient, like a god;
In whom Corruption could not lodge one charm,
While he his honest roots to gold preferr'd;
While truly rich, and by his Sabine field,
The man maintain'd, the Roman's splendour all
Was in the public wealth and glory placed:
Or ready, a rough swain, to guide the plough;

* The southern parts of Italy and Sicily, so called because of the Grecian colonies there settled.
† His scholars were enjoined silence for five years.
‡ The four cardinal virtues.

Or else, the purple o'er his shoulder thrown,
In long majestic flow, to rule the state,
With Wisdom's purest eye; or, clad in steel,
To drive the steady battle on the foe.
Hence every passion, e'en the proudest, stoop'd
To common good: Camillus, thy revenge;
Thy glory, Fabius. All submissive hence,
Consuls, Dictators, still resign'd their rule,
The very moment that the laws ordain'd.
Though Conquest o'er them clapp'd her eagle-wings,
Her laurels wreath'd, and yoked her snowy steeds
To the triumphal car; soon as expired
The latest hour of sway, taught to submit,
(A harder lesson that than to command)
Into the private Roman sunk the chief.
If Rome was served, and glorious, careless they
By whom. Their country's fame they deem'd their own;
And above envy, in a rival's train,
Sung the loud Iös by themselves deserved.
Hence matchless courage. On Cremera's bank,
Hence fell the Fabii; hence the Decii died;
And Curtius plunged into the flaming gulf.
Hence Regulus the wavering fathers firm'd,
By dreadful counsel never given before;
For Roman honour sued, and his own doom.
Hence he sustain'd to dare a death prepared
By Punic rage. On earth his manly look
Relentless fix'd, he from a last embrace,
By chains polluted, put his wife aside,
His little children climbing for a kiss;
Then dumb through rows of weeping, wondering friends,
A new illustrious exile! press'd along.
Nor less impatient did he pierce the crowds
Opposing his return, than if, escaped
From long litigious suits, he glad forsook
The noisy town a while and city cloud
To breathe Venafrian, or Tarentine air.
Need I these high particulars recount?
The meanest bosom felt a thirst for fame;
Flight their worst death, and shame their only fear.
Life had no charms, nor any terrors fate,
When Rome and glory call'd. But, in one view,
Mark the rare boast of these unequal'd times.
Ages revolved unsullied by a crime:
Astrea reign'd, and scarcely needed laws
To bind a race elated with the pride
Of virtue, and disdaining to descend
To meanness, mutual violence, and wrongs.
While war around them raged, in happy Rome
All peaceful smiled, all save the passing clouds
That often hang on Freedom's jealous brow;
And fair unblemish'd centuries elapsed,
When not a Roman bled but in the field.
Their virtue such, that an unbalanced state,
Still between Noble and Plebeian tost,
As flow'd the wave of fluctuating power,
Was then kept firm, and with triumphant prow
Rode out the storms. Oft though the native feuds.
That from the first their constitution shook,
(A latent ruin, growing as it grew,)
Stood on the threatening point of civil war
Ready to rush: yet could the lenient voice
Of wisdom, soothing the tumultuous soul,
Those sons of virtue calm. Their generous hearts
Unpetrified by self, so naked lay
And sensible to Truth, that o'er the rage
Of giddy faction, by oppression swell'd,
Prevail'd a simple fable, and at once
To peace recover'd the divided state.
But if their often cheated hopes refused
The soothing touch; still, in the love of Rome,
The dread Dictator found a sure resource.
Was she assaulted? was her glory stain'd?
One common quarrel wide inflamed the whole.
Foes in the forum in the field were friends,
By social danger bound; each fond for each,
And for their dearest country all, to die.
'Thus up the hill of empire slow they toil'd:
Till, the bold summit gain'd, the thousand states
Of proud Italia blended into one;
Then o'er the nations they resistless rush'd,
And touch'd the limits of the failing world.
'Let Fancy's eye the distant lines unite.
See that which borders wild the western main,
Where storms at large resound, and tides immense;
From Caledonia's dim cerulean coast,
And moist Hibernia, to where Atlas, lodged
Amid the restless clouds and leaning heaven,
Hangs o'er the deep that borrows thence its name.
Mark that opposed, where first the springing morn
Her roses sheds, and shakes around her dews:
From the dire deserts by the Caspian laved,
To where the Tigris and Euprates, join'd,
Impetuous tear the Babylonian plain;
And bless'd Arabia aromatic breathes.
See that dividing far the watery north,
Parent of floods! from the majestic Rhine,
Drunk by Batavian meads, to where seven mouth'd,
In Euxine waves the flashing Danube roars:
To where the frozen Tanais scarcely stirs
The dead Meotic pool, or the long Rha,*
In the black Scythian seat his torrent throws.
Last, that beneath the burning zone behold:
See where it runs, from the deep-loaded plains
Of Mauritania to the Libyan sands,
Where Ammon lifts amid the torrid waste
A verdant isle, with shade and fountain fresh,
And farther to the full Egyptian shore,
To where the Nile from Ethiopian clouds,

* The ancient name of the Volga.
† The Caspian Sea.

His never drain'd ethereal urn, descends.
In this vast space what various tongues and states!
What bounding rocks, and mountains, floods, and seas!
What purple tyrants quell'd, and nations freed!
'O'er Greece, descended chief, with stealth divine,
The Roman bounty in a flood of day:
As at her Isthmian games, a fading pomp!
Her full-assembled youth innumerous swarm'd.
On a tribunal raised, Flaminius sat:
A victor he, from the deep phalanx pierced
Of iron-coated Macedon, and back
The Grecian tyrant* to his bounds repell'd.
In the high thoughtless gaiety of game,
While sport alone their unambitious hearts
Possess'd; the sudden trumpet, sounding hoarse,
Bade silence o'er the bright assembly reign.
Then thus a herald:—"To the states of Greece
The Roman people, unconfined, restore
Their countries, cities, liberties, and laws:
Taxes remit, and garrisons withdraw."
The crowd astonish'd half, and half inform'd,
Stared dubious round; some question'd, some exclaim'd,
(Like one who dreaming, between hope and fear,
Is lost in anxious joy,) 'Be that again,
Be that again proclaim'd, distinct, and loud.'
Loud, and distinct, it was again proclaim'd;
And still as midnight in the rural shade,
When the gale slumbers, they the words devour'd.
A while severe amazement held them mute,
Then bursting broad, the boundless shout to Heaven
From many a thousand hearts ecstatic sprung.
On every hand rebellow'd to their joy
The swelling sea, the rocks, and vocal hills:
Through all her turrets stately Corinth† shook;
And, from the void above of shatter'd air,
The flitting bird fell breathless to the ground.
What piercing bliss, how keen a sense of fame,
Did then, Flaminius, reach thy inmost soul!
And with what deep-felt glory didst thou then
Escape the fondness of transported Greece?
Mix'd in a tempest of superior joy,
They left the sports; like Bacchanals they flew,
Each other straining in a strict embrace,
Nor strain'd a slave; and loud acclaims till night
Round the Proconsul's tent repeated rung.
Then, crown'd with garlands, came the festive hours;
And music, sparkling wine, and converse warm,
Their raptures waked anew. "Ye gods! (they cried)
Ye guardian gods of Greece! and are we free?
Was it not madness deem'd the very thought?
And is it true? How did we purchase chains?
At what a dire expense of kindred blood?
And are they now dissolved? And scarce one drop
For the fair first of blessings have we paid?
Courage, and conduct, in the doubtful field,
When rages wide the storm of mingling war,
Are rare indeed; but how to generous ends
To turn success, and conquest, rarer still:
That the great gods and Romans only know.
Lives there on earth, almost to Greece unknown,
A people so magnanimous, to quit
Their native soil, traverse the stormy deep,
And by their blood and treasure, spent for us,
Redeem our states, our liberties, and laws!
There does! there does! Oh saviour, Titus! Rome!'
Thus through the happy night they pour'd their souls,
And in my last reflected beams rejoiced.
As when the shepherd, on the mountain-brow,
Sits piping to his flocks and gamesome kids;
Meantime the sun, beneath the green earth sunk,
Slants upward o'er the scene a parting gleam:
Short is the glory that the mountain gilds,
Plays on the glittering flocks, and glads the swain;
To western worlds irrevocable roll'd,
Rapid, the source of light recalls his ray.'
Here interposing I—'Oh, Queen of men!
Beneath whose sceptre in essential rights
Equal they live; though placed for common good,
Various, or in subjection or command;
And that by common choice: alas! the scene,
With virtue, freedom, and with glory bright,
Streams into blood, and darkens into wo."
Thus she pursued:—"Near this great era, Rome
Began to feel the swift approach of fate,
That now her vitals gain'd: still more and more
Her deep divisions kindling into rage,
And war with chains and desolation charged.
From an unequal balance of her sons
These fierce contentions sprung: and, as increased
This hated inequality, more fierce
They flamed to tumult. Independence fail'd;
Here by luxurious wants, by real there;
And with this virtue every virtue sunk,
As, with the sliding rock, the pile sustain'd.
A last attempt, too late, the Gracchi made,
To fix the flying scale, and poise the state.
On one side swell'd aristocratic pride;
With Usury, the villain! whose fell gripe
Bends by degrees to baseness the free soul:
And Luxury rapacious, cruel, mean,
Mother of vice! While on the other crept
A populace in want, with pleasure fired;
Fit for proscriptions, for the darkest deeds,
As the proud feeder bade; inconstant, blind,
Deserting friends at need, and duped by foes:

* The King of Macedonia.
† The Isthmian games were celebrated at Corinth.

Loud and seditious, when a chief inspired
Their headlong fury, but of him deprived,
Already slaves that lick'd the scourging hand.
"This firm republic, that against the blast
Of opposition rose; that (like an oak,
Nursed on ferocious Algidum,* whose boughs
Still stronger shoot beneath the rigid axe,)
By loss, by slaughter, from the steel itself,
E'en force and spirit drew; smit with the calm,
The dead serene of prosperous fortune, pined.
Nought now her weighty legions could oppose;
Her† terror once, on Afric's tawny shore,
Now smoked in dust, a stabling now for wolves;
And every dreaded power received the yoke.
Besides, destructive, from the conquer'd East,
In the soft plunder came that worst of plagues,
That pestilence of mind, a fever'd thirst
For the false joys which Luxury prepares.
Unworthy joys! that wasteful leave behind
No mark of honour, in reflecting hour,
No secret ray to glad the conscious soul;
At once involving in one ruin wealth,
And wealth-acquiring powers: while stupid self,
Of narrow gust, and hebetating sense,
Devour the nobler faculties of bliss.
Hence Roman virtue slacken'd into sloth;
Security relax'd the softening state;
And the broad eye of government lay closed.
No more the laws inviolable reign'd,
And public weal no more: but party raged;
And partial power, and license unrestrain'd,
Let Discord through the deathful city loose.
First, mild Tiberius,‡ on thy sacred head
The fury's vengeance fell; the first, whose blood
Had since the consuls stain'd contending Rome.
Of precedent pernicious! with thee bled
Three hundred Romans; with thy brother, next,
Three thousand more: till, into battles turn'd
Debates of peace, and forced the trembling laws,
The Forum and Comitia horrid grew,
A scene of barter'd power, or reeking gore.
When, half-ashamed, Corruption's thievish arts,
And ruffian force begin to sap the mounds
And majesty of laws; if not in time
Repress'd severe, for human aid too strong
The torrent turns, and overbears the whole.
"Thus Luxury, Dissension, a mix'd rage
Of boundless pleasure and of boundless wealth,
Want-wishing change, and waste-repairing war,
Rapine for ever lost to peaceful toil,
Guilt unatoned, profuse of blood Revenge,
Corruption all avow'd, and lawless Force,
Each heightening each, alternate shook the state.
Meantime Ambition, at the dazzling head
Of hardy legions, with the laurels heap'd
And spoil of nations, in one circling blast
Combined in various storm, and from its base
The broad republic tore. By Virtue built
It touch'd the skies, and spread o'er shelter'd earth
An ample roof: by Virtue too sustain'd,
And balanced steady, every tempest sung
Innoxious by, or bade it firmer stand.
But when, with sudden and enormous change,
The first of mankind sunk into the last,
As once in Virtue, so in Vice extreme,
This universal fabric yielded loose,
Before Ambition still; and thundering down,
At last, beneath its ruins crush'd a world.
A conquering people, to themselves a prey,
Must ever fall; when their victorious troops,
In blood and rapine savage grown, can find
No land to sack and pillage but their own.
"By brutal Marius, and keen Sylla, first
Effused the deluge dire of civil blood,
Unceasing woes began, and this, or that,
Deep-drenching their revenge, nor virtue spared,
Nor sex, nor age, nor quality, nor name;
Till Rome, into a human shambles turn'd,
Made deserts lovely,—Oh, to well earn'd chains,
Devoted race!—If no true Roman then,
No Scævola there was, to raise for me
A vengeful hand: was there no father, robb'd
Of blooming youth to prop his wither'd age?
No son, a witness to his hoary sire
In dust and gore defiled? no friend, forlorn?
No wretch that doubtful trembled for himself?
None brave, or wild, to pierce a monster's heart,
Who, heaping horror round, no more deserved
The sacred shelter of the laws he spurn'd?
No:—Sad o'er all profound dejection sat;
And nerveless fear. The slave's asylum theirs:
Or flight, ill-judging, that the timid back
Turns weak to slaughter; or partaken guilt.
In vain from Sylla's vanity I drew
An unexampled deed. The power resign'd,
And all unhoped the commonwealth restored,
Amazed the public, and effaced his crimes.
Through streets yet streaming from his murderous hand
Unarm'd he stray'd, unguarded, unassail'd,
And on the bed of peace his ashes laid;
A grace, which I to his demission gave.
But with him died not the despotic soul.
Ambition saw that stooping Rome could bear
A master, nor had virtue to be free.
Hence, for succeeding years, my troubled reign
No certain peace, no spreading prospect knew.
Destruction gather'd round. Still the black soul,
Or of a Catiline, or Rullus,* swell'd
With fell designs; and all the watchful art

* A town of Latium, near Tusculum. † Carthage. ‡ Tiberius Gracchus.

* Publius Servilius Rullus, tribune of the people, proposed an Agrarian Law, in appearance very advantageous for the people, but destructive of their liberty: and which was defeated by the eloquence of Cicero, in his speech against Rullus

Of Cicero demanded, all the force,
All the state-wielding magic of his tongue;
And all the thunder of my Cato's zeal.
With these I linger'd; till the flame anew
Burst out, in blaze immense, and wrapt the world.
The shameful contest sprung; to whom mankind
Should yield the neck: to Pompey, who conceal'd
A rage impatient of an equal name;
Or to the nobler Cæsar, on whose brow
O'er daring vice deluding virtue smiled,
And who no less a vain superior scorn'd.
Both bled, but bled in vain. New traitors rose.
The venal will be bought, the base have lords.
To these vile wars I left ambitious slaves;
And from Philippi's field, from where in dust
The last of Romans, matchless Brutus! lay,
Spread to the north untamed a rapid wing.
'What though the first smooth Cæsars arts caress'd,
Merit and virtue, stimulating me?
Severely tender! cruelly humane!
The chain to clinch, and make it softer sit
On the new-broken still ferocious state.
From the dark Third,* succeeding, I beheld
The imperial monsters all.—A race on earth
Vindictive, sent the scourge of humankind!
Whose blind profusion drain'd a bankrupt world;
Whose lust to forming nature seems disgrace;
And whose infernal rage bade every drop
Of ancient blood, that yet retain'd my flame,
To that of Pætus,† in the peaceful bath,
Or Rome's affrighted streets, inglorious flow.
But almost just the meanly patient death,
That waits a tyrant's unprevented stroke.
Titus indeed gave one short evening gleam;
More cordial felt, as in the midst it spread
Of storm, and horror. The delight of men!
He who the day, when his o'erflowing hand
Had made no happy heart, concluded lost;
Trajan and he, with the mild sire‡ and son,
His son of virtue! eased awhile mankind;
And arts revived beneath their gentle beam.
Then was their last effort: what sculpture raised
To Trajan's glory, following triumphs stole;
And mix'd with Gothic forms, (the chisel's shame)
On that triumphal arch,§ the forms of Greece.
'Meantime o'er rocky Thrace, and the deep vales
Of gelid Hæmus, I pursued my flight;

* Tiberius.

† Thrasea Pætus, put to death by Nero. Tacitus introduces the account he gives of his death, thus:—'After having inhumanly slaughtered so many illustrious men, he (Nero) burned at last with a desire of cutting off virtue itself in the person of Thrasea,' &c.

‡ Antoninus Pius, and his adopted son Marcus Aurelius, afterwards called Antoninus Philosophus.

§ Constantine's arch, to build which, that of Trajan was destroyed, sculpture having been then almost entirely lost.

And, piercing farthest Scythia, westward swept
Sarmatia,* traversed by a thousand streams.
A sullen land of lakes, and fens immense,
Of rocks, resounding torrents, gloomy heaths,
And cruel deserts black with sounding pine;
Where nature frowns: though sometimes into smiles
She softens; and immediate at the touch
Of southern gales, throws from the sudden glebe
Luxuriant pasture, and a waste of flowers.
But, cold-compress'd, when the whole loaded heaven
Descends in snow, lost in one white abrupt,
Lies undistinguish'd earth; and, seized by frost
Lakes, headlong streams, and floods, and oceans sleep.
Yet there life glows; the furry millions there
Deep dig their dens beneath the sheltering snows:
And there a race of men prolific swarms,
To various pain, to little pleasure used;
On whom, keen-parching, beat Riphæan winds;
Hard like their soil, and like their climate fierce,
The nursery of nations!—These I roused,
Drove land on land, on people people pour'd;
Till from almost perpetual night they broke,
As if in search of day; and o'er the banks
Of yielding empire, only slave-sustain'd,
Resistless raged; in vengeance urged by me.
'Long in the barbarous heart the buried seeds
Of Freedom lay, for many a wintry age;
And though my spirit work'd, by slow degrees,
Nought but its pride and fierceness yet appear'd,
Then was the night of time, that parted worlds.
I quitted earth the while. As when the tribes
Aërial, warn'd of rising winter, ride
Autumnal winds, to warmer climates borne;
So, arts and each good genius in my train,
I cut the closing gloom, and soar'd to Heaven.
'In the bright regions there of purest day,
Far other scenes, and palaces, arise,
Adorn'd profuse with other arts divine.
All beauty here below, to them compared,
Would, like a rose before the midday sun,
Shrink up its blossom; like a bubble break
The passing poor magnificence of kings.
For there the King of Nature, in full blaze,
Calls every splendour forth; and there his court,
Amid ethereal powers, and virtues, holds;
Angel, archangel, tutelary gods,
Of cities, nations, empires, and of worlds.
But sacred be the veil, that kindly clouds
A light too keen for mortals; wraps a view
Too softening fair, for those that here in dust
Must cheerful toil out their appointed years.
A sense of higher life would only damp
The schoolboy's task, and spoil his playful hours.

* The ancient Sarmatia contained a vast tract of country running all along the north of Europe and Asia

Nor could the child of Reason, feeble man,
With vigour through this infant-being drudge;
Did brighter worlds, their unimagined bliss
Disclosing, dazzle and dissolve his mind.'

PART IV.

BRITAIN.

CONTENTS.

Difference betwixt the Ancients and Moderns slightly touched upon. Description of the dark ages. The Goddess of Liberty, who during these is supposed to have left earth, returns, attended with Arts and Science. She first descends on Italy. Sculpture, Painting, and Architecture fix at Rome, to revive their several arts by the great models of antiquity there, which many barbarous invasions had not been able to destroy. The revival of these arts marked out. That sometimes arts may flourish for a while under despotic governments, though never the natural and genuine production of them. Learning begins to dawn. The Muse and Science attend Liberty, who in her progress towards Great Britain raises several free states and cities. These enumerated. Author's exclamation of joy, upon seeing the British seas and coasts rise in the vision, which painted whatever the Goddess of Liberty said. She resumes her narration. The Genius of the Deep appears, and addressing Liberty, associates Great Britain into his dominion. Liberty received and congratulated by Britannia, and the Native Genii or Virtues of the island. These described. Animated by the presence of Liberty, they begin their operations. Their beneficent influence contrasted with the works and delusions of opposing Demons. Concludes with an abstract of the English history, marking the several Advances of Liberty, down to her complete establishment at the Revolution.

Struck with the rising scene, thus I amazed:
'Ah, Goddess, what a change! is earth the same?
Of the same kind the ruthless race she feeds?
And does the same fair sun and ether spread
Round this vile spot their all-enlivening soul?
Lo! beauty fails; lost in unlovely forms
Of little pomp, magnificence no more
Exalts the mind, and bid the public smile:
While to rapacious interest Glory leaves
Mankind, and every grace of life is gone.'
To this the Power, whose vital radiance calls
From the brute mass of man an order'd world:
'Wait till the morning shines, and from the depth
Of Gothic darkness springs another day.
True, Genius droops; the tender ancient taste
Of Beauty, then fresh blooming in her prime,
But faintly trembles through the callous soul;
And Grandeur, or of morals, or of life,
Sinks into safe pursuits, and creeping cares.
E'en cautious Virtue seems to stoop her flight,
And aged life to deem the generous deeds
Of youth romantic. Yet in cooler thought
Well reason'd, in researches piercing deep
Through nature's works, in profitable arts,
And all that calm Experience can disclose,
(Slow guide, but sure,) behold the world anew
Exalted rise, with other honours crown'd;
And, where my Spirit wakes the finer powers,
Athenian laurels still afresh shall bloom.
'Oblivious ages pass'd; while earth, forsook
By her best Genii, lay to Demons foul,
And unchain'd Furies, an abandon'd prey.
Contention led the van; first small of size,
But soon dilating to the skies she towers:
Then, wide as air, the livid Fury spread,
And high her head above the stormy clouds,
She blazed in omens, swell'd the groaning winds
With wild surmises, battlings, sounds of war:
From land to land the maddening trumpet blew,
And pour'd her venom through the heart of man.
Shook to the pole, the North obey'd her call.
Forth rush'd the bloody power of Gothic war,
War against human kind: Rapine, that led
Millions of raging robbers in his train:
Unlistening, barbarous Force, to whom the sword
Is reason, honour, law: the foe of arts
By monsters follow'd, hideous to behold,
That claim'd their place. Outrageous mix'd with these
Another species of tyrannic* rule,
Unknown before, whose cankerous shackles seized
The envenom'd soul; a wilder Fury, she
Even o'er her Elder Sister† tyrannized;
Or, if perchance agreed, inflamed her rage.
Dire was her train, and loud: the sable band,
Thundering;—"Submit, ye Laity! ye profane!
Earth is the Lord's, and therefore ours; let kings
Allow the common claim, and half be theirs;
If not, behold! the sacred lightning flies!"
Scholastic Discord, with a hundred tongues,
For science uttering jangling words obscure,
Where frighted reason never yet could dwell:
Of peremptory feature, cleric Pride,
Whose reddening cheek no contradiction bears;
And holy Slander, his associate firm.
On whom the lying Spirit still descends:
Mother of tortures! persecuting Zeal,
High flashing in her hand the ready torch,
Or poniard bathed in unbelieving blood;
Hell's fiercest fiend! of saintly brow demure,
Assuming a celestial seraph's name,
While she beneath the blasphemous pretence
Of pleasing Parent Heaven, the Source of Love!
Has wrought more horrors, more detested deeds,
Than all the rest combined. Led on by her,
And wild of head to work her fell designs,
Came idiot superstition; round with ears
Innumerous strow'd, ten thousand monkish forms
With legends ply'd them, and with tenets, meant
To charm or scare the simple into slaves,

* Church power, or ecclesiastical tyranny.
† Civil tyranny.

And poison reason; gross, she swallows all,
The most absurd believing ever most.
Broad o'er the whole her universal night,
The gloom still doubling, Ignorance diffused.
'Nought to be seen, but visionary monks
To councils strolling, and embroiling creeds;
Banditti Saints,* disturbing distant lands;
And unknown nations, wandering for a home.
All lay reversed: the sacred arts of rule,
Turn'd to flagitious leagues against mankind,
And arts of plunder more and more avow'd;
Pure plain Devotion† to a solemn farce;
To holy dotage Virtue, even to a guile,
To murder, and a mockery of oaths;
Brave ancient Freedom to the rage of slaves,‡
Proud of their state, and fighting for their chains;
Dishonour'd Courage to the bravo's trade,§
To civil broil; and Glory to romance.
Thus human life unhinged, to ruin reel'd,
And giddy Reason totter'd on her throne.
'At last Heaven's best inexplicable scheme,
Disclosing, bade new brightening eras smile.
The high command gone forth, Arts in my train,
And azure-mantled Science, swift we spread
A sounding pinion. Eager pity, mix'd
With indignation, urged her downward flight.
On Latium first we stoop'd, for doubtful life
That panted, sunk beneath unnumber'd woes.
Ah, poor Italia! what a bitter cup
Of vengeance hast thou drain'd? Goths. Vandals, Huns,
Lombards, barbarians broke from every land,
How many a ruffian form hast thou beheld?
What horrid jargons heard, where rage alone
Was all thy frighted ear could comprehend?
How frequent by the red inhuman hand,
Yet warm with brother's, husband's, father's blood,
Hast thou thy matrons and thy virgins seen
To violation dragg'd, and mingled death?
What conflagrations, earthquakes, ravage, floods,
Have turn'd thy cities into stony wilds;
And succourless, and bare, the poor remains
Of wretches forth to Nature's common cast?
Added to these the still continued waste
Of inbred foes that on thy vitals prey,‖
And, double tyrants, seize the very soul.
Where hadst thou treasures for this rapine all?
These hungry myriads, that thy bowels tore,
Heap'd sack on sack, and buried in their rage
Wonders of art; whence this gray scene, a mine
Of more than gold becomes and orient gems,
Where Egypt, Greece, and Rome united glow.
"Here Sculpture, Painting, Architecture, bent
From ancient models to restore their arts,
Remain'd A little trace we how they rose.
'Amid the hoary ruins, Sculpture first,
Deep digging, from the cavern dark and damp,
Their grave for ages, bid her marble race
Spring to new light. Joy sparkled in her eyes,
And old remembrance thrill'd in every thought,
As she the pleasing resurrection saw,
In leaning site, respiring from his toils,
The well known Hero,* who deliver'd Greece,
His ample chest, all tempested with force,
Unconquerable rear'd. She saw the head,
Breathing the hero, small, of Grecian size,
Scarce more extensive than the sinewy neck:
The spreading shoulders, muscular and broad;
The whole a mass of swelling sinews, touch'd
Into harmonious shape; she saw, and joy'd.
The yellow hunter, Meleager, raised
His beauteous front, and through the finish'd whole
Shows what ideas smiled of old in Greece.
Of raging aspect, rush'd impetuous forth
The Gladiator:† pitiless his look,
And each keen sinew braced, the storm of war,
Ruffling, o'er all his nervous body frowns.
The dying other‡ from the gloom she drew:
Supported on his shorten'd arm he leans,
Prone, agonizing; with incumbent fate,
Heavy declines his head; yet dark beneath
The suffering feature sullen vengeance lours.
Shame, indignation, unaccomplish'd rage,
And still the cheated eye expects his fall.
All conquest-flush'd, from prostrate Python, came
The quiver'd God.§ In graceful act he stands,
His arm extended with the slacken'd bow:
Light flows his easy robe, and fair displays
A manly soften'd form. The bloom of gods
Seems youthful o'er the beardless cheek to wave:
His features yet heroic ardour warms;
And sweet subsiding to a native smile,
Mix'd with the joy elating conquest gives,
A scatter'd frown exalts his matchless air.
On Flora moved; her full proportion'd limbs
Rise through the mantle fluttering in the breeze.
The Queen of Love‖ arose, as from the deep
She sprung in all the melting pomp of charms.
Bashful she bends, her well taught look aside
Turns in enchanting guise, where dubious mix
Vain conscious beauty, a dissembled sense
Of modest shame, and slippery looks of love.
The gazer grows enamour'd, and the stone,
As if exulting in its conquest, smiles.
So turn'd each limb, so swell'd with softening art,
That the deluded eye the marble doubts.

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* Crusades.
† The corruptions of the church of Rome.
‡ Vassalage, whence the attachment of clans to their chief.
§ Duelling. ‖ The Hierarchy.

* The Hercules of Farnese. † Fighting Gladiator.
‡ Dying Gladiator. § Apollo of Belvidere.
‖ Venus of Medici.

At last her utmost masterpiece* she found,
That Maro fired;† the miserable sire,
Wrapt with his son's in fate's severest grasp:
The serpents, twisting round, their stringent folds
Inextricable tie. Such passion here,
Such agonies, such bitterness of pain,
Seem so to tremble through the tortured stone,
That the touch'd heart engrosses all the view.
Almost unmark'd the best proportions pass,
That ever Greece beheld; and, seen alone,
On the rapt eye the imperious passions seize:
The father's double pangs, both for himself
And sons convulsed; to Heaven his rueful look,
Imploring aid, and half accusing, cast;
His fell despair with indignation mix'd,
As the strong curling monsters from his side
His full extended fury can not tear.
More tender touch'd, with varied art, his sons
All the soft rage of younger passions show.
In a boy's helpless fate one sinks oppress'd;
While, yet unpierced, the frighted other tries
His foot to steal out of the horrid twine.
"She bore no more, but straight from Gothic rust
Her chisel clear'd, and dust‡ and fragments drove
Impetuous round. Successive as it went
From son to son, with more enlivening touch,
From the brute rock it call'd the breathing form;
Till, in a legislator's awful grace
Dress'd, Buonaroti bid a Moses§ rise,
And, looking love immense, a Saviour God.§
'Of these observant, Painting felt the fire
Burn inward. Then extatic she diffused
The canvas, seized the pallet, with quick hand
The colours brew'd; and on the void expanse
Her gay creation pour'd, her mimic world.
Poor was the manner of her eldest race,
Barren and dry; just struggling from the taste,
That had for ages scared in cloisters dim
The superstitious herd; yet glorious then
Were deem'd their works; where undeveloped lay
The future wonders that enrich'd mankind,
And a new light and grace o'er Europe cast.
Arts gradual gather streams. Enlarging This,
To each his portion of her various gifts
The Goddess dealt, to none indulging all;
No, not to Raphael. At kind distance still
Perfection stands, like Happiness, to tempt
The eternal chase. In elegant design,
Improving nature: in ideas fair,
Or great, extracted from the fine antique;
In attitude, expression, airs divine;
Her sons of Rome and Florence bore the prize.
To those of Venice she the magic art
Of colours melting into colours gave.
Theirs too it was by one embracing mass
Of light and shade, that settles round the whole,
Or varies tremulous from part to part,
O'er all a binding harmony to throw,
To raise the picture, and repose the sight.
The Lombard school*, succeeding, mingled both.
'Meantime, dread fanes, and palaces, around,
Rear'd the magnific front. Music again
Her universal language of the heart
Renew'd; and, rising from the plaintive vale,
To the full concert spread, and solemn quire.
'E'en bigots smiled; to their protection took
Arts not their own, and from them borrow'd pomp:
For in a tyrant's garden these awhile
May bloom, though Freedom be their parent soil.
'And now confess'd, with gently growing gleam
The morning shone, and westward stream'd its light.
The Muse awoke. Not sooner on the wing
Is the gay bird of dawn. Artless her voice,
Untaught and wild, yet warbling through the woods
Romantic lays. But as her northern course
She, with her tutor Science, in my train,
Ardent pursued, her strains more noble grew:
While Reason drew the plan, the Heart inform'd
The moral page, and Fancy lent it grace.
'Rome and her circling deserts cast behind,
I pass'd not idle to my great sojourn.
On Arno's† fertile plain, where the rich vine
Luxuriant o'er Etrurian mountains roves,
Safe in the lap reposed of private bliss,
I small republics‡ raised. Thrice happy they!
Had social Freedom bound their peace, and arts,
Instead of ruling Power, ne'er meant for them,
Employ'd their little cares, and saved their fate.
'Beyond the rugged Apennines, that roll
Far through Italian bounds their wavy tops,
My path, too, I with public blessings strow'd:
Free states and cities, where the Lombard plain,
In spite of culture negligent and gross,
From her deep bosom pours unbidden joys,
And green o'er all the land a garden spreads.
'The barren rocks themselves beneath my foot,
Relenting bloom'd on the Ligurian shore.
Thick swarming people§ there, like emmets, seized
Amid surrounding cliffs, the scatter'd spots
Which Nature left in her destroying rage,‖
Made their own fields, nor sighed for other lands.

* The group of Laocoon and his two sons, destroyed by two serpents.

† See Æneid II. ver. 199—227.

‡ It is reported of Michael Angelo Buonaroti, the most celebrated master of modern sculpture, that he wrought with a kind of inspiration, or enthusiastical fury, which produced the effect here mentioned.

§ Esteemed the two finest pieces of modern sculpture.

* The school of the Caracci.

† The river Arno runs through Florence.

‡ The republics of Florence, Pisa, Lucca, and Sienna.

§ The Genoese territory is reckoned very populous; but the towns and villages for the most part lie hid among the Appenine rocks and mountains.

‖ According to Dr. Burnet's system of the Deluge.

There, in white prospect from the rocky hill
Gradual descending to the shelter'd shore,
By me proud Genoa's marble turrets rose.
And while my genuine spirit warm'd her sons,
Beneath her Dorias, not unworthy, she
Vied for the trident of the narrow seas,
Ere Britain had yet open'd all the main.
'Nor be the then triumphant state forgot;*
Where,† push'd from plunder'd earth, a remnant still
Inspired by me, through the dark ages kept
Of my old Roman flame some sparks alive:
The seeming god-built city! which my hand
Deep in the bosom fix'd of wondering seas.
Astonish'd mortals sail'd, with pleasing awe,
Around the sea-girt walls, by Neptune fenced,
And down the briny street; where on each hand,
Amazing seen amid unstable waves,
The splendid palace shines; and rising tides,
The green steps marking, murmur at the door.
To this fair Queen of Adria's stormy gulf,
The mart of nations! long, obedient seas
Roll'd all the treasure of the radiant East.
But now no more. Than one great tyrant worse
(Whose shared oppression lightens, as diffused,)
Each subject tearing, many tyrants rose.
The least the proudest. Join'd in dark cabal.
They jealous, watchful, silent, and severe,
Cast o'er the whole indissoluble chains:
The softer shackles of luxurious ease
They likewise added, to secure their sway.
Thus Venice fainter shines; and Commerce thus,
Of toil impatient, flags the drooping sail.
Bursting, besides, his ancient bounds, he took
A larger circle:‡ found another seat,§
Opening a thousand ports, and, charm'd with toil,
Whom nothing can dismay, far other sons.
'The mountain then, clad with eternal snow,
Confess'd my power. Deep as the rampant rocks,
By Nature thrown insuperable round,
I planted there a league of friendly states,‖
And bade plain Freedom there ambition be.
There in the vale, where rural plenty fills,
From lakes, and meads, and furrow'd fields, her horn,
Chief,¶ where the Leman pure emits the Rhone,
Rare to be seen! unguilty cities rise,
Cities of brothers form'd: while equal life,
Accorded gracious with revolving power,
Maintains them free; and, in their happy streets,
Nor cruel deed, nor misery, is known.
For valour, faith, and innocence of life,
Renown'd, a rough, laborious people, there,
Not only give the dreadful Alps to smile,
And press their culture on retiring snows;
But, to firm order train'd and patient war,
They likewise know, beyond the nerve remiss
Of mercenary force, how to defend
The tasteful little their hard toil has earn'd,
And the proud arm of Bourbon to defy.
'E'en, cheer'd by me, their shaggy mountains charm,
More than or Gallic or Italian plains;
And sickening Fancy oft, when absent long,
Pines* to behold their Alpine views again;
The hollow-winding stream: the vale, fair spread
Amid an amphitheatre of hills;
Whence, vapour-wing'd, the sudden tempest springs:
From steep to steep ascending, the gay train
Of fogs, thick-roll'd into romantic shapes:
The flitting cloud, against the summit dash'd;
And, by the sun illumined, pouring bright
A gemmy shower; hung o'er amazing rocks,
The mountain ash, and solemn sounding pine:
The snow-fed torrent, in white mazes tost,
Down to the clear ethereal lake below:
And, high o'ertopping all the broken scene,
The mountain fading into sky; where shines
On winter, winter shivering, and whose top
Licks from their cloudy magazine the snows.
'From these descending, as I waved my course
O'er vast Germania, the ferocious nurse
Of hardy men, and hearts affronting death,
I gave some favour'd cities† there to lift
A nobler brow, and through their swarming streets,
More busy, wealthy, cheerful, and alive,
In each contented face to look my soul.
'Thence the loud Baltic passing, black with storm,
To wintry Scandanavia's utmost bound;
There, I the manly race,‡ the parent hive
Of the mix'd kingdoms, form'd into a state
More regularly free. By keener air
Their genius purged, and temper'd hard by frost,
Tempest and toil their nerves, the sons of those
Whose§ only terror was a bloodless death,
They wise and dauntless, still sustain my cause.
Yet there I fix'd not. Turning to the south,
The whispering zephyrs sigh'd at my delay.'
Here, with the shifted vision, burst my joy:-

* Venice was the most flourishing city in Europe, with regard to trade before the passage to the East Indies by the Cape of Good Hope and America was discovered.

† Those who fled to some marshes in the Adriatic gulf, from the desolation spread over Italy by an irruption of the Huns, first founded there this famous city, about the beginning of the fifth century.

‡ The Main Ocean. § Great Britain.

‖ Swiss Cantons.

¶ Geneva, situated on Lacus Lemanus, a small state, but noble example of the blessings of civil and religious liberty.

* The Swiss, after having been long absent from their native country, are seized with such a violent desire of seeing it again, as affects them with a kind of languishing indisposition, called the Swiss-sickness.

† The Hans Towns. ‡ The Swedes. § See note § p. 95

'O the dear prospect! O majestic view!
See Britain's empire! lo! the watery vast
Wide waves, diffusing the cerulean plain.
And now, methinks, like clouds at distance seen,
Emerging white from deeps of ether, dawn
My kindred cliffs, whence, wafted in the gale,
Ineffable, a secret sweetness breathes.
Goddess, forgive!—My heart, surprised, o'erflows
With filial fondness for the land you bless.'
As parents to a child complacent deign
Approvance, the celestial brightness smiled;
Then thus—'As o'er the wave resounding deep,
To my near reign, the happy isle, I steer'd
With easy wing; behold! from surge to surge,
Stalk'd the tremendous Genius of the Deep.
Around him clouds, in mingled tempest, hung;
Thick flashing meteors crown'd his starry head;
And ready thunder redden'd in his hand,
Or from it stream'd compress'd the gloomy cloud.
Where'er he look'd, the trembling waves recoil'd.
He needs but strike the conscious flood, and shook
From shore to shore in agitation dire,
It works his dreadful will. To me his voice
(Like that hoarse blast that round the cavern howls,
Mix'd with the murmurs of the falling main,)
Address'd, began—"By Fate commission'd, go,
My Sister-Goddess now, to yon bless'd isle,
Henceforth the partner of my rough domain.
All my dread walks to Britons open lie.
Those that refulgent, or with rosy morn,
Or yellow evening, flame; those that, profuse,
Drunk by equator suns, severely shine;
Or those that, to the poles approaching, rise
In billows rolling into Alps of ice.
E'en, yet untouch'd by daring keel, be theirs
The vast Pacific; that on other worlds,
Their future conquest, rolls resounding tides.
Long I maintain'd inviolate my reign;
Nor Alexanders me, nor Cæsars braved.
Still, in the crook of shore, the coward sail
Till now low crept; and peddling commerce ply'd
Between near joining lands. For Britons, chief,
It was reserved, with star-directed prow,
To dare the middle deep, and drive assured
To distant nations through the pathless main.
Chief, for their fearless hearts the glory waits,
Long months from land, while the black stormy night
Around them rages, on the groaning mast
With unshook knee to know their giddy way;
To sing, unquell'd, amid the lashing wave;
To laugh at danger. Theirs the triumph be,
By deep Invention's keen pervading eye,
The heart of Courage, and the hand of Toil,
Each conquer'd ocean staining with their blood,
Instead of treasure robb'd by ruffian war,
Round social earth to circle fair exchange,
And bind the nations in a golden chain.
To these I honour'd stoop. Rushing to light
A race of men behold! whose daring deeds
Will in renown exalt my nameless plains
O'er those of fabling earth, as hers to mine
In terror yield. Nay, could my savage heart
Such glories check, their unsubmitting soul
Would all my fury brave, my tempest climb,
And might in spite of me my kingdom force."
Here, waiting no reply, the shadowy power
Eased the dark sky, and to the deeps return'd:
While the loud thunder rattling from his hand,
Auspicious, shook opponent Gallia's shore.

'Of this encounter glad, my way to land
I quick pursued, that from the smiling sea
Received me joyous. Loud acclaims were heard,
And music, more than mortal, warbling, fill'd
With pleased astonishment the labouring hind,
Who for a while the unfinish'd furrow left,
And let the listening steer forget his toil.
Unseen by grosser eye, Britannia breathed,
And her aërial train, these sounds of joy.
For of old time, since first the rushing flood,
Urged by almighty power, this favour'd isle
Turn'd flashing from the continent aside,
Indented shore to shore responsive still,
Its guardian she—the Goddess, whose staid eye
Beams the dark azure of the doubtful dawn.
Her tresses, like a flood of soften'd light
Through clouds imbrown'd, in waving circles play.
Warm on her cheek sits Beauty's brightest rose,
Of high demeanour, stately, shedding grace
With every motion. Full her rising chest;
And new ideas, from her finish'd shape,
Charm'd Sculpture taking might improve her art.
Such the fair Guardian of an isle that boasts,
Profuse as vernal blooms, the fairest dames.
High shining on the promontory's brow,
Awaiting me, she stood; with hope inflamed,
By my mixed spirit burning in her sons,
To firm, to polish, and exalt the state.

'The native Genii, round her, radiant smiled.
Courage, of soft deportment, aspect calm,
Unboastful, suffering long, and, till provoked,
As mild and harmless as the sporting child;
But, on just reason, once his fury roused,
No lion springs more eager to his prey:
Blood is a pastime; and his heart, elate,
Knows no depressing fear. That Virtue known
By the relenting look, whose equal heart
For others feels, as for another self;
Of various name, as various objects wake,
Warm into action, the kind sense within:
Whether the blameless poor, the nobly maim'd,
The lost to reason, the declined in life,
The helpless young that kiss no mother's hand,
And the gray second infancy of age,
She gives in public families to live,
A sight to gladden Heaven! whether she stands
Fair beckoning at the hospitable gate,
And bids the stranger take repose and joy:

Whether, to solace honest labour, she
Rejoices those that make the land rejoice:
Or whether to Philosophy, and Arts,
(At once the basis and the finish'd pride
Of government and life) she spreads her hand;
Nor knows her gift profuse, nor seems to know,
Doubling her bounty, that she gives at all.
Justice to these her awful presence join'd,
The mother of the state! no low revenge,
No turbid passions in her breast ferment:
Tender, serene, compassionate of vice,
As the last wo that can afflict mankind,
She punishment awards; yet of the good
More piteous still, and of the suffering whole,
Awards it firm. So fair her just decree,
That, in his judging peers, each on himself
Pronounces his own doom. O happy land!
Where reigns alone this justice of the free!
Mid the bright group Sincerity his front,
Diffusive, rear'd; his pure untroubled eye
The fount of truth. The thoughtful Power, apart,
Now, pensive, cast on earth his fix'd regard,
Now, touch'd celestial, launch'd it on the sky.
The Genius he whence Britain shines supreme,
The land of light, and rectitude of mind.
He, too, the fire of fancy feeds intense,
With all the train of passions thence derived:
Not kindling quick, a noisy transient blaze,
But gradual, silent, lasting, and profound.
Near him Retirement, pointing to the shade,
And Independence stood: the generous pair,
That simple life, the quiet-whispering grove,
And the still raptures of the free-born soul,
To cates prefer by Virtue brought, not earn'd,
Proudly prefer them to the servile pomp,
And to the heart-embitter'd joys of slaves.
Or should the latter, to the public scene
Demanded, quit his silvan friend awhile;
Nought can his firmness shake, nothing seduce
His zeal, still active for the commonweal;
Nor stormy tyrants, nor corruption's tools,
Foul ministers, dark-working by the force
Of secret-sapping gold. All their vile arts,
Their shameful honours, their perfidious gifts,
He greatly scorns; and, if he must betray
His plunder'd country, or his power resign,
A moment's parley were eternal shame:
Illustrious into private life again,
From dirty levees he unstain'd ascends,
And firm in senates stands the patriot's ground,
Or draws new vigour in the peaceful shade.
Aloof the bashful virtue hover'd coy,
Proving by sweet distrust distrusted worth.
Rough Labour closed the train: and in his hand
Rude, callous, sinew-swell'd, and black with toil,
Came manly Indignation. Sour he seems,
And more than seems, by lawless pride assail'd;
Yet kind at heart, and just, and generous, there
No vengeance lurks, no pale insidious gall:
Even in the very luxury of rage,
He softening can forgive a gallant foe;
The nerve, support, and glory of the land
Nor be Religion, rational and free,
Here pass'd in silence; whose enraptured eye
Sees Heaven with earth connected, human things
Link'd to divine: who not from servile fear,
By rights for some weak tyrant incense fit,
The God of Love adores, but from a heart
Effusing gladness, into pleasing awe
That now astonish'd swells, now in a calm
Of fearless confidence that smiles serene;
That lives devotion, one continual hymn,
And then most grateful, when Heaven's bounty most
Is right enjoy'd. This ever cheerful Power
O'er the raised circle ray'd superior day.
'I joy'd to join the Virtues, whence my reign
O'er Albion was to rise. Each cheering each,
And, like the circling planets from the sun,
All borrowing beams from me, a heighten'd zeal
Impatient fired us to commence our toils,
Or pleasures rather. Long the pungent time
Pass'd not in mutual hails; but, through the land
Darting our light, we shone the fogs away.
'The Virtues conquer with a single look.
Such grace, such beauty, such victorious light,
Live in their presence, stream in every glance,
That the soul won, enamour'd, and refined,
Grows their own image, pure ethereal flame.
Hence the foul Demons, that oppose our reign,
Would still from us deluded mortals wrap;
Or in gross shades they drown the visual ray,
Or by the fogs of prejudice, where mix
Falsehood and truth confounded, foil the sense
With vain refracted images of bliss.
But chief around the court of flatter'd kings
They roll the dusky rampart, wall o'er wall
Of darkest pile, and with their thickest shade
Secure the throne. No savage Alp, the den
Of wolves, and bears, and monstrous things obscene,
That vex the swain, and waste the country round,
Protected lies beneath a deeper cloud.
Yet there we sometimes send a searching ray,
As, at the sacred opening of the morn,
The prowling race retire; so, pierced severe,
Before our potent blaze these Demons fly,
And all their works dissolve——the whisper'd tale,
That, like the fabling Nile, no fountain knows.
Fair-faced Deceit, whose wily conscious eye
Ne'er looks direct. The tongue that licks the dust,
But, when it safely dares, as prompt to sting:
Smooth crocodile Destruction, whose fell tears
Ensnare. The Janus-face of courtly Pride;
One to superiors heaves submissive eyes,
On hapless worth the other scowls disdain:
Cheeks that for some weak tenderness, alone,
Some virtuous slip can wear a blush. The laugh

Profane, when midnight bowls disclose the heart,
At starving Virtue, and at Virtue's fools.
Determined to be broke, the plighted faith;
Nay more, the godless oath, that knows no ties.
Soft-buzzing Slander; silky moths, that eat
An honest name. The harpy hand, and maw,
Of avaricious Luxury; who makes
The throne his shelter, venal laws his fort,
And, his service, who betrays his king.
'Now turn your view, and mark from Celtic* night
To present grandeur how my Britain rose.
'Bold were those Britons, who, the careless sons
Of Nature, roam'd the forest-bounds, at once
Their verdant city, high-embowering fane,
And the gay circle of their woodland wars:
For by the Druid† taught, that death but shifts
The vital scene, they that prime fear despised;
And, prone to rush on steel, disdain'd to spare
An ill saved life that must again return.
Erect from Nature's hand, by tyrant force,
And still more tyrant custom, unsubdued,
Man knows no master save creating Heaven,
Or such as choice and common good ordain.
This general sense, with which the nations I
Promiscuous fire, in Britons burn'd intense,
Of future times prophetic. Witness, Rome,
Who saw'st thy Cæsar, from the naked land,
Whose only fort was British hearts, repell'd,
To seek Pharsalian wreaths. Witness, the toil,
The blood of ages, bootless to secure,
Beneath an empire's‡ yoke, a stubborn isle,
Disputed hard, and never quite subdued.
The North§ remain'd untouch'd, where those who scorn'd
To stoop retired; and, to their keen effort
Yielding at last, recoil'd the Roman power.
In vain, unable to sustain the shock,
From sea to sea desponding legions raised
The wall immense,‖ and yet, on summer's eve,
While sport his lambkins round, the shepherd's gaze.
Continual o'er it burst the northern storm,¶
As often, check'd, receded; threatening hoarse
A swift return. But the devouring flood
No more endured control, when, to support
The last remains of empire,** was recall'd
The weary Roman, and the Briton lay
Unnerved, exhausted, spiritless, and sunk.
Great proof! how men enfeeble into slaves.
The sword* behind him flash'd; before him roar'd,
Deaf to his woes, the deep. Forlorn, around
He roll'd his eye, not sparkling ardent flame,
As when Caractacus† to battle led
Silurian swains, and Boadicea‡ taught
Her raging troops the miseries of slaves.
'Then (sad relief!) from the bleak coast, tha* hears
The German ocean roar, deep-blooming, strong,
And yellow-hair'd, the blue-eyed Saxon came.
He came implored, but came with other aim
Than to protect: for conquest and defence
Suffices the same arm. With the fierce race
Pour'd in a fresh invigorating stream,
Blood, where unquell'd a mighty spirit glow'd.
Rash war, and perilous battle, their delight;
And immature, and red with glorious wounds,
Unpeaceful death their choice: deriving thence
A right to feast, and drain immortal bowls,
In Odin's hall;§ whose blazing roof resounds
The genial uproar of those shades, who fall
In desperate fight, or by some brave attempt;
And though more polish'd times the martial creed
Disown, yet still the fearless habit lives.
Nor were the surly gifts of war their all.
Wisdom was likewise theirs, indulgent laws,
The calm gradations of art-nursing peace,
And matchless orders, the deep basis still

* Great Britain was peopled by the Celtæ or Gauls.

† The Druids, among the ancient Gauls and Britons, had the care and direction of all religious matters.

‡ The Roman empire.

§ Caledonia, inhabited by the Scots and Picts; whither a great many Britons, who would not submit to the Romans, retired.

‖ The wall of Severus, built upon Adrian's rampart, which ran for eighty miles quite across the country, from the mouth of the Tyne to Solway Frith.

¶ Irruptions of the Scots and Picts.

** The Roman empire being miserably torn by the northern nations, Britain was for ever abandoned by the Romans in the year 426 or 427.

* The Britons applying to Ætius the Roman general for assistance, thus expressed their miserable condition:—"We know not which way to turn us. The Barbarians drive us to sea, and the sea forces us back to the Barbarians; between which we have only the choice of two deaths, either to be swallowed up by the waves, or butchered by the sword."

† King of the Silures, famous for his great exploits, and accounted the best general Great Britain had ever produced. The Silures were esteemed the bravest and most powerful of all the Britons: they inhabited Herefordshire, Radnorshire, Brecknockshire, Monmouthshire, and Glamorganshire.

‡ Queen of the Iceni.

§ It is certain, that an opinion was fixed and general among them (the Goths) that death was but the entrance into another life; that all men who lived lazy and unactive lives, and died natural deaths, by sickness or by age, went into vast caves under ground, all dark and miry, full of noisome creatures usual to such places, and there for ever groveled in endless stench and misery. On the contrary, all who gave themselves to warlike actions and enterprises, to the conquest of their neighbours and the slaughter of their enemies, and died in battle, or of violent deaths upon bold adventures or resolutions, went immediately to the vast hall or palace of Odin, their god of war, who eternally kept open house for all such guests, where they were entertained at infinite tables, in perpetual feasts and mirth, carousing in bowls made of the skulls of their enemies they had slain; according to the number of whom, every one in these mansions of pleasure was the most honoured and best entertained.

Sir William Temple's Essay on Heroic Virtue

On which ascends my British reign. Untamed
To the refining subtleties of slaves,
They brought a happy government along;
Form'd by that freedom, which with secret voice,
Impartial Nature teaches all her sons,
And which of old through the whole Scythian mass
I strong inspired. Monarchical their state,
But prudently confined, and mingled wise
Of each harmonious power: only, too much,
Imperious war into their rule infused,
Prevail'd their General-King, and Chieftain-Thanes.

'In many a field, by civil fury stain'd,
Bled the discordant Heptarchy;* and long
(Educing good from ill) the battle groan'd;
Ere, blood-cemented, Anglo-Saxon saw
Egbert† and Peace on one united throne.

'No sooner dawn'd the fair disclosing calm
Of brighter days, when lo! the North anew,
With stormy nations black, on England pour'd
Woes the severest e'er a people felt.
The Danish Raven,‡ lured by annual prey,
Hung o'er the land incessant. Fleet on fleet
Of barbarous pirates unremitting tore
The miserable coast. Before them stalk'd,
Far seen, the Demon of devouring Flame;
Rapine, and Murder, all with blood besmear'd,
Without or ear, or eye, or feeling heart;
While close behind them march'd the sallow Power
Of desolating Famine, who delights
In grass-grown cities, and in desert fields;
And purple-spotted Pestilence, by whom
E'en Friendship scared, in sickening horror sinks
Each social sense and tenderness of life.
Fixing at last, the sanguinary race,
Spread, from the Humber's loud resounding shore
To where the Thames devolves his gentle maze,
And with superior arm the Saxon awed.
But Superstition first, and monkish dreams,
And monk-directed cloister-seeking kings,
Had eat away his vigour, eat away
His edge of Courage, and depress'd the soul
Of conquering Freedom, which he once respired.
Thus cruel ages pass'd; and rare appear'd
White-mantled Peace, exulting o'er the vale,
As when, with Alfred,§ from the wilds she came
To policed cities and protected plains.
Thus by degrees the Saxon empire sunk,
Then set entire in Hastings'* bloody field.

"Compendious war! (on Britain's glory bent
So fate ordain'd) in that decisive day,
The haughty Norman seized at once an isle,
For which, through many a century, in vain,
The Roman, Saxon, Dane, had toil'd and bled.
Of Gothic nations this the final burst;
And, mix'd the genius of these people all,
Their virtues mix'd in one exalted stream,
Here the rich tide of English blood grew full.

'Awhile my Spirit slept; the land awhile,
Affrighted, droop'd beneath despotic rage.
Instead of Edward's† equal gentle laws,
The furious victor's partial will prevail'd.
All prostrate lay; and, in the secret shade,
Deep stung but fearful Indignation gnash'd
His teeth. Of freedom, property, despoil'd,
And of their bulwark, arms; with castles crush'd,
With ruffians quarter'd o'er the bridled land;
The shivering wretches, at the curfew‡ sound,
Dejected shrunk into their sordid beds,
And, through the mournful gloom of ancient times
Mused sad, or dreamt of better. E'en to feed
A tyrant's idle sport the peasant starved:
To the wild herd, the pasture of the tame,
The cheerful hamlet, spiry town, was given,
And the brown forest§ roughen'd wide around.

'But this so dead, so vile submission, long
Endured not. Gathering force, my gradual flame
Shook off the mountain of tyrannic sway.
Unused to bend, impatient of control,
Tyrants themselves the common tyrant check'd.
The Church, by kings intractable and fierce,
Denied her portion of the plunder'd state,
Or tempted, by the timorous and weak,
To gain new ground, first taught their rapine law.
The Barons next a nobler league began,
Both those of English and of Norman race,
In one fraternal nation blended now,
The nation of the Free! press'd by a band‖

* The seven kingdoms of the Anglo-Saxons, considered as being united into one common government, under a general in chief or monarch, and by the means of an assembly general, or wittenagemot.

† Egbert, King of Wessex, who, after having reduced all the other kingdoms of the Heptarchy under his dominion, was the first king of England.

‡ A famous Danish standard was called Reafan, or Raven. The Danes imagined that, before a battle, the Raven wrought upon this standard clapt its wings or hung down its head, in token of victory or defeat.

§ Alfred the Great, renowned in war and no less famous in peace for his many excellent institutions, particularly that of juries.

* The battle of Hastings, in which Harold II. the last of the Saxon kings, was slain, and William the Conqueror made himself master of England.

† Edward III, the Confessor, who reduced the West Saxon, Mercian, and Danish laws into one body; which from that time became common to all England, under the name of "The Laws of Edward."

‡ The Curfew-Bell (from the French Couvrefeu) which was rung every night at eight of the clock, to warn the English to put out their fires and candles, under the penalty of a severe fine.

§ The New Forest in Hampshire; to make which, the country for above thirty miles in compass was laid waste.

‖ On the 5th of June, 1215, King John, met by the Barons on Runnemede, signed the Great Charter of Liberties, or Magna Charta.

O! Patriots, ardent as the summer's noon
That looks delighted on, the tyrant see!
Mark! how with feign'd alacrity he bears
His strong reluctance down, his dark revenge,
And gives the Charter, by which life indeed
Becomes of price, a glory to be man.
'Through this, and through succeeding reigns affirm'd
These long-contested rights, the wholesome winds
Of Opposition* hence began to blow,
And often since have lent the country life.
Before their breath Corruption's insect-blights,
The darkening clouds of evil counsel fly;
Or should they sounding swell a putrid court,
A pestilential ministry, they purge,
And ventilated states renew their bloom.
'Though with the temper'd Monarchy here mix'd
Aristocratic sway, the People still,
Flatter'd by this or that, as interest lean'd,
No full protection knew. For me reserved,
And for my Commons, was that glorious turn.
They crown'd my first attempt, in senates† rose
The fort of Freedom! Slow till then, alone,
Had work'd that general liberty, that soul
Which generous nature breathes, and which, when left
By me to bondage, was corrupted Rome,
I through the northern nations wide diffused.
Hence, many a people, fierce with freedom, rush'd
From the rude iron regions of the North,
To Libyan deserts swarm protruding swarm,
And pour'd new spirit through a slavish world.
Yet o'er these Gothic states, the King and Chiefs
Retain'd the high prerogative of war,
And with enormous property engross'd
The mingled power. But on Britannia's shore
Now present, I to raise my reign began
By raising the Democracy, the third
And broadest bulwark of the guarded state.
Then was the full the perfect plan disclosed
Of Britain's matchless constitution, mix'd
Of mutual checking and supporting powers,
King, Lords, and Commons; nor the name of free
Deserving, while the vassal-many droop'd:
For since the moment of the whole they form,
So, as depress'd or raised, the balance they
Of public welfare and of glory cast.
Mark from this period the continual proof.
'When Kings of narrow genius, minion-rid,
Neglecting faithful worth for fawning slaves;
Proudly regardless of their people's plaints,
And poorly passive of insulting foes;
Double, not prudent, obstinate, not firm,
Their mercy fear, necessity their faith;
Instead of generous fire, presumptuous, hot,
Rash to resolve, and slothful to perform;
Tyrants at once and slaves, imperious, mean
To want rapacious joining shameful waste;
By counsels weak and wicked, easy roused
To paltry schemes of absolute command,
To seek their splendour in their sure disgrace,
And in a broken ruin'd people wealth:
When such o'ercast the state, no bond or love,
No heart, no soul, no unity, no nerve,
Combined the loose disjointed public, lost
To fame abroad, to happiness at home.
'But when an Edward* and a Henry† breathed
Through the charm'd whole one all-exerting soul:
Drawn sympathetic from his dark retreat,
When wide-attracted merit round them glow'd:
Then counsels just, extensive, generous, firm,
Amid the maze of state, determined kept
Some ruling point in view: when, on the stock
Of public good and glory grafted, spread
Their palms, their laurels; or, if thence they stray'd,
Swift to return, and patient of restraint:
When regal state, pre-eminence of place,
They scorn'd to deem pre-eminence of ease,
To be luxurious drones, that only rob
The busy hive: as in distinction, power,
Indulgence, honour, and advantage, first;
When they too claim'd in virtue, danger, toil,
Superior rank; with equal hand prepared
To guard the subject, and to quell the foe:
When such with me their vital influence shed,
No mutter'd grievance, hopeless sigh, was heard;
No foul distrust through wary senates ran,
Confined their bounty, and their ardour quench'd:
On aid, unquestion'd liberal aid was given:
Safe in their conduct, by their valour fired,
Fond where they led victorious armies rush'd;
And Cressy, Poitiers, Agincourt‡ proclaim
What Kings supported by almighty Love,
And People fired with Liberty, can do.
'Be veil'd the savage reigns,§ when kindred rage
The numerous once Plantagenets devour'd,
A race to vengeance vow'd! and, when oppress'd
By private feuds, almost extinguish'd lay

* The league formed by the Barons, during the reign of John, in the year 1213, was the first confederacy made in England in defence of the nation's interest against the king.

§ The Commons are generally thought to have been first represented in Parliament towards the end of Henry the Third's reign. To a Parliament called in the year 1264, each county was ordered to send four knights, as representatives of their respective shires: and to a parliament called in the year following, each county was ordered to send, as their representatives, two knights, and each city and borough as many citizens and burgesses. Till then, history makes no mention of them; whence a very strong argument may be drawn, to fix the original of the House of Commons to that era.

* Edward III. † Henry V.

‡ The famous battles gained by the English over the French.

§ During the civil wars betwixt the families of York and Lancaster.

My quivering flame. But, in the next, behold!
A cautious tyrant* lend it oil anew.
Proud, dark, suspicious, brooding o'er his gold,
As how to fix his throne he jealous cast
His crafty views around; pierced with a ray,
Which on his timid mind I darted full,
He mark'd the Barons of excessive sway,
At pleasure making and unmaking kings;†
And hence to crush these petty tyrants, plann'd
A law,‡ that let them by the silent waste
Of luxury, their landed wealth diffuse,
And with that wealth their implicated power.
By soft degrees a mighty change ensued,
E'en working to this day. With streams, deduced
From these diminish'd floods, the country smiled.
As when impetuous from the snow-heap'd Alps,
To vernal suns relenting, pours the Rhine;
While, undivided, oft, with wasteful sweep,
He foams along; but through Batavian meads,
Branch'd into fair canals, indulgent flows;
Waters a thousand fields; and culture, trade,
Towns, meadows, gliding ships, and villas mix'd,
A rich, a wondrous landscape rises round.
His furious son,§ the soul enslaving chain,‖
Which many a doting venerable age
Had link by link strong twisted round the land,
Shook off. No longer could be borne a power,
From Heaven pretended, to deceive, to void
Each solemn tie, to plunder without bounds,
To curb the generous soul, to fool mankind;
And, wild at last, to plunge into a sea
Of blood and horror. The returning light,
That first through Wickliff¶ streak'd the priestly gloom,
Now burst in open day. Bared to the blaze,
Forth from the haunts of Superstition** crawled
Her motley sons, fantastic figures all;
And, wide dispersed, their useless fetid wealth
In graceful labour bloom'd, and fruits of peace.
'Trade, join'd to these, on every sea display'd
A daring canvass, pour'd with every tide
A golden flood. From other worlds†† were roll'd
The guilty glittering stores, whose fatal charms,
By the plain Indian happily despised,
Yet work'd his wo; and to the blissful groves,
Where Nature lived herself among her sons,
And Innocence and Joy for ever dwelt,
Drew rage unknown to pagan climes before,
The worst the zeal-inflamed barbarian drew.
Be no such horrid commerce, Britain, thine!
But want for want, with mutual aid, supply.
'The Commons thus enrich'd, and powerful grown,
Against the Barons weigh'd. Eliza then,
Amid these doubtful motions, steady, gave
The beam to fix. She! like the secret Eye,
That never closes on a guarded world,
So sought, so mark'd, so seized the public good,
That self-supported, without one ally,
She awed her inward, quell'd her circling foes.
Inspired by me, beneath her sheltering arm,
In spite of raging universal sway*
And raging seas repress'd, the Belgic states,
My bulwark on the continent, arose.
Matchless in all the spirit of her days!
With confidence, unbounded, fearless love
Elate, her fervent people waited gay,
Cheerful demanded the long threaten'd fleet,†
And dash'd the pride of Spain around their isle.
Nor ceased the British thunder here to rage:
The deep, reclaim'd, obey'd its awful call;
In fire and smoke Iberian ports involved,
The trembling foe even to the centre shook
Of their new conquer'd world, and, skulking, stole
By veering winds their Indian treasure home.
Meantime, Peace, Plenty, Justice, Science, Arts,
With softer laurels crown'd her happy reign.
As yet uncircumscribed the regal power,
And wild and vague prerogative remain'd;
A wide voracious gulf, where swallow'd oft
The helpless subject lay. This to reduce
To the just limit was my great effort.
'By means that evil seem to narrow man,
Superior Beings work their mystic will:
From storm and trouble thus a settled calm,
At last, effulgent, o'er Britannia smiled.
'The gathering tempest, Heaven-commission'd, came,
Came in the prince,‡ who, drunk with flattery, dreamt
His vain pacific counsels ruled the world;
Though scorn'd abroad, bewilder'd in a maze
Of fruitless treaties; while at home enslaved,
And by a worthless crew insatiate drain'd,
He lost his people's confidence and love:
Irreparable loss! whence crowns become
An anxious burden. Years inglorious pass'd:
Triumphant Spain the vengeful draught enjoy'd:
Abandon'd Frederick§ pined, and Raleigh bled.

* Henry VII.

† The famous Earl of Warwick, during the reigns of Henry VI. and Edward IV. was called the 'King Maker.'

‡ Permitting the Barons to alienate their lands.

§ Henry VIII. ‖ Of papal dominion.

¶ John Wickliff, doctor of divinity, who, towards the close of the fourteenth century, published doctrines very contrary to those of the church of Rome, and particularly denying the papal authority. His followers grew very numerous, and were called Lollards.

** Suppression of monasteries.

†† The Spanish West Indies.

* The dominion of the house of Austria.

† The Spanish Armada. Rapin says, that after proper measures had been taken, the enemy was expected with uncommon alacrity.

‡ James I.

§ Elector Palatine, and who had been chosen King of Bohemia, but was stripped of all his dominions and dignities by

But nothing that to these internal broils,
That rancour, he began; while lawless sway
He, with his slavish Doctors, tried to rear
On metaphysic,* on enchanted ground,
And all the mazy quibbles of the schools:
As if for one, and sometimes for the worst,
Heaven had mankind in vengeance only made.
Vain the pretence! not so the dire effect,
The fierce, the foolish discord† thence derived,
That tears the country still, by party rage
And ministerial clamour, kept alive.
In action weak, and for the wordy war
Best fitted, faint this prince pursued his claim:
Content to teach the subject herd, how great,
How sacred he! how despicable they!
'But his unyielding son‡ these doctrines drank,
With all a bigot's rage; (who never damps
By reasoning his fire) and what they taught,
Warm, and tenacious, into practice push'd.
Senates, in vain, their kind restraint applied:
The more they struggled to support the laws,
His justice-dreading ministers the more
Drove him beyond their bounds. Tired with the check
Of faithful Love, and with the flattery pleased
Of false designing Guilt, the fountains§ he
Of Public Wisdom and of Justice shut.
Wide mourn'd the land. Straight to the voted aid
Free, cordial, large, of never failing source,
The illegal imposition follow'd harsh,
With execration given, or ruthless squeezed
From an insulted people, by a band
Of the worst ruffians, those of tyrant power.
Oppression walk'd at large, and pour'd abroad
Her unrelenting train: informers, spies,
Bloodhounds, that sturdy Freedom to the grove
Pursue; projectors of aggrieving schemes,
Commerce to load for unprotected seas,‖
To sell the starving many to the few,¶
And drain a thousand ways the exhausted land,
E'en from that place, whence healing Peace should flow,
And Gospel truth, inhuman bigots shed
Their poison** round; and on the venal bench,
Instead of justice, party held the scale,
And violence the sword. Afflicted years,
Too patient, felt at last their vengeance full.

'Mid the low murmurs of submissive fear
And mingled rage, my Hamden raised his voice,
And to the laws appeal'd; the laws no more
In judgment sat, behoved some other ear.
When instant from the keen resentive North,
By long oppression, by religion roused,
The guardian army came. Beneath its wing
Was call'd, though meant to furnish hostile aid,
The more than Roman senate. There a flame
Broke out, that clear'd, consumed, renew'd the land.
In deep motion hurl'd, nor Greece, nor Rome
Indignant bursting from a tyrant's chain,
While, full of me, each agitated soul
Strung every nerve, and flamed in every eye,
Had e'er beheld such light and heat combined!
Such heads and hearts! such dreadful zeal, led on
By calm majestic wisdom, taught its course
What nuisance to devour; such wisdom fired
With unabating zeal, and aim'd sincere
To clear the weedy state, restore the laws,
And for the future to secure their sway.
'This then the purpose of my mildest sons.
But man is blind. A nation once inflamed
(Chief, should the breath of factions fury blow,
With the wild rage of mad enthusiast swell'd)
Not easy cools again. From breast to breast,
From eye to eye, the kindling passions mix
In heighten'd blaze; and, ever wise and just,
High Heaven to gracious ends directs the storm.
Thus in one conflagration Britain wrapt,
And by Confusion's lawless sons despoil'd,
Kings, Lords, and Commons, thundering to the ground,
Successive, rush'd—Lo! from their ashes rose,
Gay beaming radiant youth, the Phœnix State.*
'The grievous yoke of vassalage, the yoke
Of private life, lay by those flames dissolved;
And, from the wasteful, the luxurious king,†
Was purchased‡ that which taught the young to bend.
Stronger restored, the Commons tax'd the whole,
And built on that eternal rock their power.
The Crown, of its hereditary wealth
Despoil'd, on senates more dependent grew,
And they more frequent, more assured. Yet lived,
And in full vigour spread that bitter root,
The passive doctrines, by their patrons first,
Opposed ferocious, when they touch themselves.
'This wild delusive cant; the rash cabal
Of hungry courtiers, ravenous for prey;
The bigot, restless in a double chain
To bind anew the land; the constant need,
Of finding faithless means, of shifting forms,
And flattering senates, to supply his waste,
These tore some moments from the careless prince.

the Emperor Ferdinand, while James the First, his father-in-law, being amused from time to time, endeavoured to mediate a peace.

* The monstrous and till then unheard-of doctrines of divine indefeasible hereditary right, passive obedience, &c.

† The parties of Whig and Tory. ‡ Charles I.

§ Parliaments. ‖ Ship-money. ¶ Monopolies.

** The raging High-Church sermons of these times, inspiring a spirit of slavish submission to the court, and of bitter persecution against those whom they call Church and State Puritans.

* At the Restoration. † Charles II.

‡ Court of Wards.

And in his breast awaked the kindred plan.
By dangerous softness long he mined his way;
By subtle arts, dissimulating deep;
By sharing what corruption shower'd, profuse;
By breathing wide the gay licentious plague,
And pleasing manners, fitted to deceive.
'At last subsided the delirious joy,
On whose high billow, from the saintly reign,
The nation drove too far. A pension'd king,
Against his country bribed by Gallic gold;
The Port* pernicious sold, the Scylla since
And fell Charybdis of the British seas;
Freedom attack'd abroad,† with surer blow
To cut it off at home; the saviour league‡
Of Europe broke; the progress e'en advanced
Of universal sway,§ which to reduce
Such seas of blood and treasure Britain cost;
The millions, by a generous people given,
Or squander'd vile, or to corrupt, disgrace,
And awe the land with forces‖ not their own.
Employ'd; the darling church herself betray'd;
All these, broad glaring, oped the general eye,
And waked my spirit, the resisting soul.
'Mild was, at first, and half ashamed, the check
Of senates, shook from the fantastic dream
Of absolute submission, tenets vile!
Which slaves would blush to own, and which reduced
To practice, always honest nature shock.
Not e'en the mask removed, and the fierce front
Of tyranny disclosed; nor trampled laws;
Nor seized each badge of freedom¶ through the land;
Nor Sidney bleeding for the unpublish'd page;
Nor on the bench avowed corruption placed,
And murderous rage itself, in Jefferies' form;**
Nor endless acts of arbitrary power,
Cruel, and false, could raise the public arm.
Distrustful, scatter'd, of combining chiefs
Devoid and dreading blind rapacious war,
The patient public turns not, till impell'd
To the near verge of ruin. Hence I roused
The bigot king,†† and hurried fated on
His measures immature. But chief his zeal,
Out-flaming Rome herself, portentous scared
The troubled nation: Mary's horrid days
To fancy bleeding rose, and the dire glare
Of Smithfield lighten'd in its eyes anew,
Yet silence reign'd. Each on another scowl'd
Rueful amazement, pressing down his rage:
As, mustering vengeance, the deep thunder frowns,
Awfully still, waiting the high command
To spring. Straight from his country Europe saved,
To save Britannia, lo! my darling son,
Than hero more! the patriot of mankind!
Immortal Nassau came. I hush'd the deep
By demons roused, and bade the listed winds,*
Still shifting as beloved, with various breath,
Waft the deliverer to the longing shore.
See! wide alive, the foaming channel† bright
With swelling sails, and all the pride of war,
Delightful view! when justice draws the sword:
And mark! diffusing ardent soul around,
And swest contempt of death, My streaming flag.‡
E'en adverse navies§ bless'd the binding gale,
Kept down the glad acclaim, and silent joy'd.
Arrived, the pomp, and not the waste of arms
His progress mark'd. The faint opposing host‖
For once in yielding their best victory found,
And by desertion proved exalted faith:
While his the bloodless conquest of the heart,
Shouts without groan, and triumph without war.
'Then dawn'd the period destined to confine
The surge of wild prerogative, to raise
A mound restraining its imperious rage,
And bid the raving deep no farther flow
Nor were, without that fence, the swallow'd state
Better than Belgian plains without their dykes,
Sustaining weighty seas. This, often saved
By more than human hand, the public saw,
And seized the white-wing'd moment. Pleased¶ to yield
Destructive power, a wise heroic prince**
E'en lent his aid—Thrice happy! did they know
Their happiness, Britannia's bounded kings.
What though not theirs the boast, in dungeon glooms,
To plunge bold freedom; or, to cheerless wilds,
To drive him from the cordial face of friend;
Or fierce to strike him at the midnight hour,
By mandate blind, not justice, that delights
To dare the keenest eye of open day.

* Dunkirk.
† The war in conjunction with France, against the Dutch.
‡ The Triple Alliance. § Under Lewis XIV.
‖ A standing army, raised without the consent of parliament.
¶ The charters of corporations. ** Judge Jefferies.
†† James II.

* The Prince of Orange, in his passage to England, though his fleet had been at first dispersed by a storm, was afterwards extremely favoured by several changes of wind.
† Rapin, in his History of England.—The third of November the fleet entered the Channel, and lay by between Calais and Dover, to stay for the ships that were behind. Here the Prince called a council of war. It is easy to imagine what a glorious show the fleet made. Five or six hundred ships in so narrow a channel, and both the English and French shores covered with numberless spectators, are no common sight. For my part, who was then on board the fleet, I own it struck me extremely.
‡ The Prince placed himself in the main body, carrying a flag with English colours, and their highnesses' arms surrounded with this motto, 'The Protestant Religion and the Liberties of England;' and underneath the motto of the house of Nassau, 'Je Maintiendrai,' I will maintain.—*Rapin.*
§ The English fleet. ‖ The king's army.
¶ By the Bill of Rights and the Act of Succession.
** William III.

What though no glory to control the laws,
And make injurious will their only rule,
They deem it. What though, tools of wanton power,
Pestiferous armies swarm not at their call.
What though they give not a relentless crew
Of civil furies, proud oppression's fangs!
To tear at pleasure the dejected land,
With starving labour pampering idle waste.
To clothe the naked, feed the hungry, wipe
The guiltless tear from lone affliction's eye;
To raise hid merit, set the alluring light
Of virtue high to view; to nourish arts,
Direct the thunder of an injured state,
Make a whole glorious people sing for joy,
Bless humankind, and through the downward depth
Of future times to spread that better sun
Which lights up British soul: for deeds like these,
The dazzling fair career unbounded lies;
While (still superior bliss!) the dark abrupt
Is kindly barr'd, the precipice of ill.
O luxury divine! O poor to this,
Ye giddy glories of despotic thrones!
By this, by this indeed, is imaged Heaven,
By boundless good without the power of ill.
'And now behold! exalted as the cope
That swells immense o'er many-peopled earth,
And like it free, my fabric stands complete,
The palace of the laws. To the four heavens
Four gates impartial thrown, unceasing crowds,
With kings themselves the hearty peasant mix'd,
Pour urgent in. And though to different ranks
Responsive place belongs, yet equal spreads
The sheltering roof o'er all; while plenty flows,
And glad contentment echoes round the whole.
Ye floods descend! Ye winds, confirming, blow!
Nor outward tempest, nor corrosive time,
Nought but the felon undermining hand
Of dark corruption, can its frame dissolve,
And lay the toil of ages in the dust.'

PART V.

THE PROSPECT.

CONTENTS.

The author addresses the Goddess of Liberty, marking the happiness and grandeur of Great Britain, as arising from her influence. She resumes her discourse, and points out the chief Virtues which are necessary to maintain her establishment there. Recommends as its last ornament and finishing, Sciences, Fine Arts, and Public Works. The encouragement of these urged from the example of France, though under a despotic government. The whole concludes with a prospect of future times, given by the Goddess of Liberty: this described by the author, as it passes in vision before him.

HERE interposing, as the Goddess paused;—
'O bless'd Britannia! in thy presence bless'd,
Thou guardian of mankind! whence spring, alone,
All human grandeur, happiness, and fame,
For toil, by thee protracted, feels no pain;
The poor man's lot with milk and honey flows;
And, gilded with thy rays, even death looks gay.
Let other lands the potent blessings boast
Of more exalting suns. Let Asia's woods,
Untended yield the vegetable fleece:
And let the little insect-artist form,
On higher life intent, its silken tomb.
Let wondering rocks, in radiant birth, disclose
The various tinctured children of the sun.
From the prone beam let more delicious fruits,
A flavour drink, that in one piercing taste
Bids each combine. Let Gallic vineyards burst
With floods of joy; with mild balsamic juice
The Tuscan olive. Let Arabia breathe
Her spicy gales, her vital gums distil.
Turbid with gold, let southern rivers flow
And orient floods draw soft, o'er pearls, their maze.
Let Afric vaunt her treasures; let Peru
Deep in her bowels her own ruin breed,
The yellow traitor that her bliss betray'd,—
Unequal'd bliss——and to unequal'd rage!
Yet nor the gorgeous East, nor golden South,
Nor, in full prime, that new discover'd world,
Where flames the falling day, in wealth and praise,
Shall with Britannia vie; while, Goddess, she
Derives her praise from thee, her matchless charms.
Her hearty fruits the hand of freedom own;
And warm with culture, her thick clustering fields
Prolific teem. Eternal verdure crowns
Her meeds; her gardens smile eternal spring.
She gives the hunter-horse, unquell'd by toil,
Ardent, to rush into the rapid chase:
She, whitening o'er her downs, diffusive, pours
Unnumber'd flocks: she weaves the fleecy robe,
That wraps the nations: she, to lusty droves,
The richest pasture spreads; and, hers, deep-wave
Autumnal seas of pleasing plenty round.
These her delights: and by no baneful herb,
No darting tiger, no grim lion's glare,
No fierce descending wolf, no serpent roll'd
In spires immense progressive o'er the land,
Disturb'd. Enlivening these, add cities, full
Of wealth, of trade, of cheerful toiling crowds:
Add thriving towns; add villages and farms,
Innumerous sow'd along the lively vale,
Where bold unrival'd peasants happy dwell:
Add ancient seats, with venerable oaks
Embosom'd high, while kindred floods below
Wind through the mead; and those of modern hand,
More pompous, add, that splendid shine afar.
Need I her limpid lakes, her rivers name,

Where swarm the finny race? Thee, chief, O Thames!
On whose each tide, glad with returning sails,
Flows in the mingled harvest of mankind?
And thee, thou Severn, whose prodigious swell,
And waves, resounding, imitate the main?
Why need I name her deep capacious ports,
That point around the world? and why her seas?
All ocean is her own, and every land
To whom her ruling thunder ocean bears.
She too the mineral feeds: the obedient lead,
The warlike iron, nor the peaceful less,
Forming of life art-civilized the bond;
And that* the Tyrian merchant sought of old,
Not dreaming then of Britain's brighter fame.
She rears to freedom an undaunted race:
Compatriot zealous, hospitable, kind,
Hers the warm Cambrian: hers the lofty Scot.
To hardship tamed, active in arts and arms,
Fired with a restless, an impatient flame,
That leads him raptured where ambition calls:
And English merit hers; where meet, combined,
Whate'er high fancy, sound judicious thought,
An ample, generous heart, undrooping soul,
And firm tenacious valour can bestow.
Great nurse of fruits, of flocks, of commerce, she!
Great nurse of men! by thee, O Goddess, taught,
Her old renown I trace, disclose her source
Of wealth, of grandeur, and to Britains sing
A strain the Muses never touch'd before.
'But how shall this thy mighty kingdom stand?
On what unyielding base? how finish'd shine?'
At this her eye, collecting all its fire,
Beam'd more than human; and her awful voice,
Majestic thus she raised: 'To Britons bear
This closing strain, and with intenser note
Loud let it sound in their awaken'd ear:
'On virtue can alone my kingdom stand,
On public virtue, every virtue join'd.
For, lost this social cement of mankind,
The greatest empires, by scarce-felt degrees,
Will moulder soft away; till, tottering loose,
They, prone at last, to total ruin rush.
Unbless'd by virtue, government a league
Becomes, a circling junto of the great,
To rob by law; religion mild, a yoke
To tame the stooping soul, a trick of state
To mask their rapine, and to share the prey.
What are, without it, senates; save a face
Of consultation deep and reason free,
While the determined voice and heart are sold?
What boasted freedom, save a sounding name?
And what election, but a market vile
Of slaves self-barter'd? Virtue! without thee,
There is no ruling eye, no nerve, in states;
War has no vigour, and no safety peace:
E'en justice warps to party, laws oppress,
Wide through the land their weak protection fails,
First broke the balance, and then scorn'd the sword.
Thus nations sink, society dissolves;
Rapine and guile, and violence break loose,
Everting life, and turning love to gall;
Man hates the face of man, and Indian woods
And Libya's hissing sands to him are tame.
'By those three virtues be the frame sustain'd
Of British freedom; independent life;
Integrity in office; and, o'er all
Supreme, a passion for the commonweal.
'Hail! Independence, hail! Heaven's next best gift,
To that of life and an immortal soul!
The life of life! that to the banquet high
And sober meal gives taste; to the bow'd roof
Fair-dream'd repose, and to the cottage charms.
Of public freedom, hail, thou secret source:
Whose streams, from every quarter confluent, form
My better Nile, that nurses human life.
By rills from thee deduced, irriguous, fed,
The private field looks gay, with nature's wealth
Abundant flows, and blooms with each delight
That nature craves. Its happy master there,
The only freeman, walks his pleasing round:
Sweet-featured peace attending; fearless truth;
Firm resolution; goodness, blessing all
That can rejoice; contentment, surest friend;
And, still fresh stores from nature's book derived,
Philosophy, companion ever new.
These cheer his rural, and sustain or fire,
When into action call'd, his busy hours.
Meantime true judging moderate desires,
Economy and taste, combined, direct
His clear affairs, and from debauching fiends
Secure his little kingdom. Nor can those
Whom fortune heaps, without these virtues reach
That truce with pain, that animated ease,
That self-enjoyment springing from within;
That independence active or retired,
Which make the soundest bliss of man below:
But lost beneath the rubbish of their means,
And drain'd by wants to nature all unknown,
A wandering, tasteless, gaily wretched train,
Though rich, are beggars, and though noble, slaves.
'Lo! damn'd to wealth, at what a gross expense
They purchase disappointment, pain, and shame.
Instead of hearty hospitable cheer,
See! how the hall with brutal riot flows;
While in the foaming flood, fermenting, steep'd
The country maddens into party rage.
Mark! those disgraceful piles of wood and stone,
Those parks and gardens, where, his haunts be-trimm'd,
And nature by presumptuous art oppress'd,
The woodland genius mourns. See! the full board

* Tin.

That steams disgust, and bowls that give no joy;
No truth invited there, to feed the mind;
Nor wit, the wine-rejoicing reason quaffs.
Hark! how the dome with insolence resounds,
With those retain'd by vanity to scare
Repose and friends. To tyrant fashion, mark!
The costly worship paid, to the broad gaze
Of fools. From still delusive day to day,
Led an eternal round of lying hope,
See! self-abandon'd, how they roam adrift,
Dash'd o'er the town, a miserable wreck!
Then to adore some warbling eunuch turn'd,
With Midas' ears they crowd; or to the buzz
Of masquerade unblushing: or, to show
Their scorn of nature, at the tragic scene
They mirthful sit, or prove the comic true.
But, chief, behold! around the rattling board,
The civil robbers ranged; and e'en the fair,
The tender fair, each sweetness laid aside,
As fierce for plunder as all-licensed troops
In some sack'd city. Thus dissolved their wealth,
Without one generous luxury dissolved,
Or quarter'd on it many a needless want,
At the throng'd levee bends the venal tribe;
With fair but faithless smiles each varnish'd o'er,
Each smooth as those that mutually deceive,
And for their falsehood each despising each;
Till shook their patron by the wintry winds,
Wide flies the wither'd shower, and leaves him bare.
O far superior Afric's sable sons,
By merchant pilfer'd, to these willing slaves!
And rich, as unsqueezed favourite, to them,
Is he who can his virtue boast alone!

'Britons! be firm!—nor let corruption sly
Twine round your heart indissoluble chains!
The steel of Brutus burst the grosser bonds
By Cæsar cast o'er Rome; but still remain'd
The soft enchanting fetters of the mind,
And other Cæsars rose. Determined, hold
Your independence; for, that once destroy'd,
Unfounded, Freedom is a morning dream,
That flits aërial from the spreading eye.

'Forbid it, Heaven! that ever I need urge
Integrity in office on my sons!
Inculcate common honour——not to rob——
And whom?—the gracious, the confiding hand,
That lavishly rewards? the toiling poor,
Whose cup with many a bitter drop is mix'd;
The guardian public; every face they see,
And every friend; nay, in effect themselves.
As in familiar life, the villain's fate
Admits no cure; so, when a desperate age
At this arrives, I the devoted race
Indignant spurn, and hopeless soar away.

'But, ah too little known to modern times!
Be not the noblest passion past unsung;
That ray peculiar, from unbounded love
Effused, which kindles the heroic soul;
Devotion to the public. Glorious flame!
Celestial ardour! in what unknown worlds,
Profusely scatter'd through the blue immense,
Hast thou been blessing myriads, since in Rome,
Old virtuous Rome, so many deathless names
From thee their lustre drew? since, taught by thee,
Their poverty put splendour to the blush,
Pain grew luxurious, and e'en death delight?
O wilt thou ne'er, in thy long period, look,
With blaze direct, on this my last retreat?

''Tis not enough, from self right understood
Reflected, that thy rays inflame the heart:
Though virtue not disdains appeals to self,
Dreads not the trial; all her joys are true,
Nor is there any real joy save hers.
Far less the tepid the declaiming race,
Foes to corruption, to its wages friends,
Or those whom private passions, for a while,
Beneath my standard list; can they suffice
To raise and fix the glory of my reign?

'An active flood of universal love
Must swell the breast. First, in effusion wide,
The restless spirit roves creation round
And seizes every being: stronger then
It tends to life, whate'er the kindred search
Of bliss allies: then, more collected still,
It urges human kind; a passion grown,
At last, the central parent public calls
Its utmost effort forth, awakes each sense,
The comely, grand, and tender. Without this
This awful pant, shook from sublimer powers
Than those of self, this Heaven-infused delight,
This moral gravitation, rushing prone
To press the public good, my system soon,
Traverse, to several selfish centres drawn,
Will reel to ruin: while for ever shut
Stand the bright portals of desponding fame.

'From sordid self shoot up no shining deeds,
None of those ancient lights, that gladden earth,
Give grace to being, and arouse the brave
To just ambition, virtue's quickening fire!
Life tedious grows, and idly bustling round,
Fill'd up with actions animal and mean,
A dull gazette! The impatient reader scorns
The poor historic page; till kindly comes
Oblivion, and redeems a people's shame.
Not so the times when, emulation-stung,
Greece shone in genius, science, and in arts,
And Rome in virtues dreadful to be told!
To live was glory then! and charm'd mankind,
Through the deep periods of devolving time,
Those, raptured, copy; these, astonish'd, read.

'True, a corrupted state, with every vice
And every meanness foul, this passion damps.
Who can, unshock'd, behold the cruel eye?
The pale inveigling smile? the ruffian front?
The wretch abandon'd to relentless self,
Equally vile if miser or profuse?
Powers not of God, assiduous to corrupt?

'The fell deputed tyrant, who devours
The poor and weak,* at distance from redress?
Delirious faction bellowing loud my name?
The false fair-seeming patriot's hollow boast?
A race resolved on bondage, fierce for chains,
My sacred rights a merchandize alone
Esteeming, and to work their feeder's will
By deeds, a horror to mankind, prepared,
As were the dregs of Romulus of old?
Who these indeed can undetesting see?—
But who unpitying? to the generous eye
Distress is virtue; and, though self-betray'd,
A people struggling with their fate must rouse
The hero's throb. Nor can a land, at once,
Be lost to virtue quite. How glorious then!
Fit luxury for gods! to save the good,
Protect the feeble, dash bold vice aside,
Depress the wicked, and restore the frail.
Posterity, besides! the young are pure,
And sons may tinge their father's cheek with shame.
'Should then the times arrive (which Heaven avert!)
That Britons bend unnerved, not by the force
Of arms, more generous and more manly, quell'd,
But by corruption's soul-dejecting arts.
Arts impudent! and gross! by their own gold,
In part bestow'd, to bribe them to give all.
With party raging, or immersed in sloth,
Should they Britannia's well fought laurels yield
To slily conquering Gaul; e'en from her brow
Let her own naval oak be basely torn,
By such as tremble at the stiffening gale,
And nerveless sink while others sing rejoiced,
Or (darker prospect! scarce one gleam behind
Disclosing) should the broad corruptive plague
Breathe from the city to the farthest hut,
That sits serene within the forest shade;
The fever'd people fire, inflame their wants,
And their luxurious thirst, so gathering rage,
That, were a buyer found, they stand prepared
To sell their birthright for a cooling draught.
Should shameless pens for plain corruption plead;
The hired assassins of the commonweal!
Deem'd the declaiming rant of Greece and Rome,
Should public virtue grow the public scoff,
Till private, failing, staggers through the land:
Till round the city loose mechanic want,
Dire prowling nightly, makes the cheerful haunts
Of men more hideous than Numidian wilds,
Nor from its fury sleeps the vale in peace;
And murders, horrors, perjuries abound:
Nay, till to lowest deeds the highest stoop;
The rich, like starving wretches, thirst for gold:
And those, on whom the vernal showers of Heaven
All-bounteous fall, and that prime lot bestow,
A power to live to nature and themselves.
In sick attendance wear their anxious days,
With fortune, joyless, and with honours, mean.
Meantime, perhaps, profusion flows around,
The waste of war, without the works of peace;
No mark of millions in the gulf absorpt
Of uncreating vice, none but the rage
Of roused corruption still demanding more.
That very portion, which (by faithful skill
Employ'd) might make the smiling public rear
Her ornamented head, drill'd through the hands
Of mercenary tools, serves but to nurse
A locust band within, and in the bud
Leaves starved each work of dignity and use.
'I paint the worst. But should these times arrive,
If any nobler passion yet remain,
Let all my sons all parties fling aside,
Despise their nonsense, and together join;
Let worth and virtue scorning low despair,
Exerted full, from every quarter shine,
Commix'd in heighten'd blaze. Light flash'd to light,
Moral, or intellectual, more intense
By giving glows. As on pure winter's eve,
Gradual, the stars effulge; fainter, at first,
They, straggling, rise; but when the radiant host,
In thick profusion pour'd, shine out immense;
Each casting vivid influence on each,
From pole to pole a glittering deluge plays,
And worlds above rejoice, and men below.
'But why to Britons this superfluous strain?—
Good nature, honest truth e'en somewhat blunt,
Of crooked baseness an indignant scorn,
A zeal unyielding in their country's cause,
And ready bounty, wont to dwell with them—
Nor only wont—wide o'er the land diffused,
In many a bless'd retirement still they dwell.
'To softer prospect turn we now the view,
To laurel'd science, arts, and public works,
That lend my finish'd fabric comely pride,
Grandeur and grace. Of sullen genius he!
Cursed by the Muses! by the Graces loathed!
Who deems beneath the public's high regard
These last enlivening touches of my reign.
However puff'd with power, and gorged with wealth,
A nation be; let trade enormous rise,
Let East and South their mingled treasure pour,
Till, swell'd impetuous, the corrupting flood
Burst o'er the city and devour the land:
Yet these neglected, these recording arts,
Wealth rots, a nuisance; and, oblivious sunk,
That nation must another Carthage lie.
If not by them, on monumental brass,

* Lord Molesworth, in his account of Denmark, says,—'It is observed, that in limited monarchies and commonwealths, a neighbourhood to the seat of the government is advantageous to the subjects; whilst the distant provinces are less thriving, and more liable to oppression.'

On sculptured marble, on the deathless page,
Impress'd, renown had left no trace behind:
In vain, to future times, the sage had thought,
The legislator plann'd, the hero found
A beauteous death, the patriot toil'd in vain.
The awarders they of Fame's immortal wreath,
They rouse ambition, they the mind exalt,
Give great ideas, lovely forms infuse,
Delight the general eye, and, dress'd by them,
The moral Venus glows with double charms.
'Science, my close associate, still attends
Where'er I go. Sometimes, in simple guise,
She walks the furrow with the consul-swain,
Whispering unletter'd wisdom to the heart,
Direct; or, sometimes, in the pompous robe
Of fancy dress'd, she charms Athenian wits,
And a whole sapient city round her burns.
Then o'er her brow Minerva's terrors nod:
With Xenophon, sometimes, in dire extremes,
She breathes deliberate soul, and makes retreat*
Unequal'd glory: with the Theban sage,
Epaminondas, first and best of men!
Sometimes she bids the deep-embattled host,
Above the vulgar reach, resistless form'd,
March to sure conquest—never gain'd before!†
Nor on the treacherous seas of giddy state
Unskilful she: when the triumphant tide
Of high-swoln empire wears one boundless smile,
And the gale tempts to new pursuits of fame,
Sometimes, with Scipio, she collects her sail,
And seeks the blissful shore of rural ease,
Where, but the Aonian maids, no sirens sing;
Or should the deep-brew'd tempest muttering rise,
While rocks and shoals perfidious lurk around,
With Tully she her wide-reviving light
To senates holds; a Catiline confounds,
And saves awhile from Cæsar sinking Rome.
Such the kind power, whose piercing eye dissolves
Each mental fetter, and sets reason free;
For me inspiring an enlightened zeal,
The more tenacious as the more convinced
How happy freemen, and how wretched slaves.
To Britons not unknown, to Britons full
The Goddess spreads her stores, the secret soul
That quickens trade, the breath unseen that wafts
To them the treasures of a balanced world.
But finer arts (save what the Muse has sung
In daring flight, above all modern wing,)
Neglected droop the head; and public works,
Broke by corruption into private gain,
Not ornament, disgrace; not serve, destroy.

'Shall Britons, by their own joint wisdom ruled
Beneath one Royal Head, whose vital power
Connects, enlivens, and exerts the whole;
In finer arts, and public works, shall they
To Gallia yield? yield to a land that bends
Depress'd, and broke, beneath the will of one?
Of one who, should the unkingly thirst of gold,
Or tyrant passions, or ambition, prompt,
Calls locust-armies o'er the blasted land:
Drains from its thirsty bounds the springs of wealth,
His own insatiate reservoir to fill:
To the lone desert patriot-merit frowns,
Or into dungeons arts, when they, their chains,
Indignant, bursting; for their nobler works
All other license scorn but truths and mine.
Oh shame to think! shall Britons, in the field
Unconquer'd still, the better laurel lose?
E'en in that monarch's reign,* who vainly dream't,
By giddy power, betray'd, and flatter'd pride,
To grasp unbounded sway; while, swarming round,
His armies dared all Europe to the field;
To hostile hands while treasure flow'd profuse,
And, that great source of treasure, subjects' blood,
Inhuman squander'd, sicken'd every land;
From Britain, chief, while my superior sons,
In vengeance rushing, dash'd his idle hopes,
And bade his agonizing heart be low:
E'en then, as in the golden calm of peace,
What public works, at home, what arts arose!
What various science shone! what genius glowd!
'Tis not for me to paint, diffusive shot
O'er fair extents of land, the shining road;
The flood-compelling arch; the long canal,†
Through mountains piercing and uniting seas;
The dome‡ resounding sweet with infant joy,
From famine saved, or cruel-handed shame;
And that‡ where valour counts his noble scars,
The land where social pleasure loves to dwell,
Of the fierce demon, Gothic duel, freed;
The robber from his farthest forest chased;
The turbid city clear'd, and, by degrees,
Into sure peace the best police refined,
Magnificence, and grace, and decent joy.
Let Gallic bards record, how honour'd arts,
And science, by despotic bounty bless'd,
At distance flourish'd from my parent-eye.
Restoring ancient taste, how Boileau rose:
How the big Roman soul shook, in Corneille,
The trembling stage. In elegant Racine;
How the more powerful though more humble voice
Of nature-painting Greece, resistless, breathed
The whole awaken'd heart. How Moliere's scene,
Chastised and regular, with well judged wit,
Not scatter'd wild, and native humour, graced,

*The famous Retreat of the Ten Thousand was chiefly conducted by Xenophon.

†Epaminondas, after having beat the Lacedemonians and their allies, in the battle of Leuctra, made an incursion, at the head of a powerful army, into Laconia. It was now six hundred years since the Dorians had possessed this country, and in all that time the face of an enemy had not been seen within their territories.—*Plutarch in Agesilaus.*

*Lewis XIV. †The Canal of Languedoc.
‡The hospitals for foundlings and invalids.

Was life itself. To public honours raised,
How learning in warm seminaries* spread;
And, more for glory than the small reward,
How emulation strove. How their pure tongue
Almost obtain'd what was denied their arms.
From Rome, awhile, how Painting, courted long,
With Poussin came; ancient design, that lifts
A fairer front, and looks another soul.
How the kind art,† that, of unvalued price,
The famed and only picture, easy, gives,
Refined her touch, and, through the shadow'd piece,
All the live spirit of the painter pour'd.
Coyest of arts, how sculpture northward deign'd
A look, and bade her Giradon arise.
How lavish grandeur blazed; the barren waste,
Astonish'd, saw the sudden palace swell,
And fountains spout amid its arid shades.
For leagues, bright vistas opening to the view,
How forests in majestic gardens smiled.
How menial arts, by their gay sisters taught,
Wove the deep flower, the blooming foliage train'd
In joyous figures o'er the silky lawn,
The palace cheer'd, illumed the storied wall,
And with the pencil vied the glowing loom.‡
These laurels, Lewis, by the droppings raised
Of thy profusion, its dishonour shade,
And, green through future times, shall bind thy brow;
While the vain honours of perfidious war
Wither abhor'd, or in oblivion lost.
With what prevailing vigour had they shot,
And stole a deeper root, by the full tide
Of war-sunk millions fed? Superior still,
How had they branch'd luxuriant to the skies,
In Britain planted, by the potent juice
Of Freedom swell'd? Forced is the bloom of arts,
A false uncertain spring, when Bounty gives,
Weak without me, a transitory gleam.
Fair shine the slippery days, enticing skies
Of favour smile, and courtly breezes blow;
Till arts betray'd, trust to the flattering air
Their tender blossom: then malignant rise
The blights of Envy, of those insect clouds,
That, blasting merit often cover courts:
Nay, should perchance some kind Mæcenas aid
The doubtful beamings of his prince's soul,
His wavering ardour fix, and unconfined
Diffuse his warm beneficence around;
Yet death, at last, and wintry tyrants come.
Each sprig of genius killing at the root.
But when with me imperial Bounty joins,
Wide o'er the public blows eternal spring;
While mingled autumn every harvest pours
Of every land; whate'er Invention, Art,
Creating Toil, and Nature can produce.'
Here ceased the Goddess; and her ardent wings,
Dipt in the colours of the heavenly bow,
Stood waving radiance round, for sudden flight
Prepared, when thus, impatient, burst my prayer:
'Oh forming light of life! O better sun!
Sun of mankind! by whom the cloudy north,
Sublimed, not envies Languedocian skies,
That, unstain'd ether all, diffusive smile:
When shall we call these ancient laurels ours?
And when thy work complete?' Straight with her hand
Celestial red, she touch'd my darken'd eyes.
As at the touch of day the shades dissolve,
So quick, methought, the misty circle clear'd,
That dims the dawn of being here below:
The future shone disclosed, and in long view,
Bright rising eras instant rush'd to light.
'They come! great Goddess! I the times behold!
The times our fathers, in the bloody field,
Have earn'd so dear, and, not with less renown,
In the warm struggles of the senate fight.
The times I see! whose glory to supply,
For toiling ages, Commerce round the world
Has wing'd unnumber'd sails, and from each land
Materials heap'd, that, well employ'd, with Rome
Might vie our grandeur, and with Greece our art.
'Lo! Princes I behold contriving still,
And still conducting firm some brave design;
Kings! that the narrow joyless circle scorn,
Burst the blockade of false designing men,
Of treacherous smiles, of adulation fell,
And of the blinding clouds around them thrown:
Their court rejoicing millions; worth alone,
And Virtue dear to them; their best delight,
In just proportion, to give general joy;
Their jealous care thy kingdom to maintain;
The public glory theirs; unsparing love
Their endless treasure; and their deeds their praise.
With thee they work. Nought can resist your force:
Life feels it quickening in her dark retreats:
Strong spread the blooms of Genius, Science, Art;
His bashful bounds disclosing Merit breaks;
And, big with fruits of glory, Virtue blows
Expansive o'er the land. Another race
Of generous youth, of patriot sires, I see!
Not those vain insects fluttering in the blaze
Of court, and ball, and play; those venal souls
Corruption's veteran unrelenting bands,
That to their vices slaves, can ne'er be free.
'I see the fountains purged! whence life derives
A clear or turbid flow; see the young mind
Not fed impure by chance, by flattery fool'd,
Or by scholastic jargon bloated proud,
But fill'd and nourish'd by the light of truth.
Then beam'd through fancy the refining ray,

* The Academies of Sciences, of the Belles Lettres, and of Painting.
† Engraving.
‡ The tapestry of the Gobelins.

And pouring on the heart, the passions feel
At once informing light and moving flame;
Till moral, public, graceful action crowns
The whole. Behold! the fair contention glows,
In all that mind or body can adorn,
And form to life. Instead of barren heads,
Barbarian pedants, wrangling sons of pride,
And truth-perplexing metaphysic wits,
Men, patriots, chiefs, and citizens are form'd.
'Lo! Justice, like the liberal light of Heaven,
Unpurchased shines on all; and from her beam,
Appalling guilt, retire the savage crew,
That prowl amid the darkness they themselves
Have thrown around the laws. Oppression grieves,
See! how her legal furies bite the lip,
While Yorkes and Talbots their deep snares detect,
And seize swift justice through the clouds they raise.
'See! social Labour lifts his guarded head,
And men not yield to government in vain.
From the sure land is rooted ruffian force,
And, the lewd nurse of villains, idle waste;
Lo! raised their haunts, down dash'd their maddening bowl,
A nation's poison! beauteous order reigns!
Manly submission, unimposing toil,
Trade without guile, civility that marks
From the foul herd of brutal slaves thy sons,
And fearless peace. Or should affronting war
To slow but dreadful vengeance rouse the just,
Unfailing fields of freemen I behold!
That know, with their own proper arm, to guard
Their own bless'd isle against a leaguing world.
Despairing Gaul her boiling youth restrains,
Dissolved her dream of universal sway;
The winds and seas are Britain's wide domain;
And not a sail, but by permission, spreads.
'Lo! swarming southward on rejoicing suns,
Gay colonies extend; the calm retreat
Of undeserved distress, the better home
Of those whom bigots chase from foreign lands.
Nor built on rapine, servitude, and wo,
And in their turn some petty tyrant's prey;
But, bound by social Freedom, firm they rise;
Such as, of late, an Oglethorpe has form'd,
And, crowding round, the charm'd Savannah sees.
'Horrid with want and misery no more
Our streets the tender passenger afflict.
Nor shivering age, nor sickness without friend,
Or home, or bed to bear his burning load;
Nor agonizing infant, that ne'er earn'd
Its guiltless pangs; I see! the stores, profuse,
Which British bounty has to these assign'd,
No more the sacrilegious riot swell
Of cannibal devourers! right applied,
No starving wretch the land of freedom stains:
If poor, employment finds; if old, demands,
If sick, if maim'd, his miserable due;
And will, if young, repay the fondest care.

Sweet sets the sun of stormy life; and sweet
The morning shines, in Mercy's dews array'd.
Lo! how they rise! these families of Heaven!
That! chief,* (but why—ye bigots!—why so late?)
Where blooms and warbles glad a rising age;
What smiles of praise! and, while their song ascends,
The listening seraph lays his lute aside.
'Hark! the gay muses raise a nobler strain,
With active nature, warm impassion'd truth,
Engaging fable, lucid order, notes
Of various string, and heart-felt image fill'd.
Behold! I see the dread delightful school
Of temper'd passions, and of polish'd life,
Restored: behold! the well dissembled scene
Calls from embellish'd eyes the lovely tear,
Or lights up mirth in modest cheeks again.
Lo! vanish'd monster land. Lo! driven away
Those that Apollo's sacred walks profane:
Their wild creation scatter'd, where a world
Unknown to nature, Chaos more confused,
O'er the brute scene its Ouran-Outangs pours;†
Detested forms! that, on the mind impress'd,
Corrupt, confound, and barbarize an age.
'Behold! all thine again the Sister-Arts,
Thy graces they, knit in harmonious dance,
Nursed by the treasure from a nation drain'd
Their works to purchase, they to nobler rouse
Their untamed genius, their unfetter'd thought;
Of pompous tyrants, and of dreaming monks,
The gaudy tools, and prisoners no more.
'Lo! numerous domes a Burlington confess:
For kings and senates fit, the palace see!
The temple breathing a religious awe;
E'en framed with elegance the plain retreat,
The private dwelling. Certain in his aim,
Taste, never idly working, saves expense.
'See! silvan scenes, where Art alone pretends
To dress her mistress, and disclose her charms:
Such as a Pope in miniature has shown;‡
A Bathurst o'er the widening forests§ spreads;
And such as form a Richmond, Chiswick, Stowe
'August, around, what public works I see!
Lo! stately streets, lo! squares that court the breeze,
In spite of those to whom pertains the care,
Ingulfing more than founded Roman ways,
Lo! ray'd from cities o'er the brighten'd land,
Connecting sea to sea, the solid road.
Lo! the proud arch (no vile exactor's stand)
With easy sweep bestrides the chasing flood.
See! long canals, and deepen'd rivers join
Each part with each, and with the circling main

* The Foundling Hospital.
† A creature which, of all brutes, most resembles man. *See Dr. Tyson's Treatise on this animal.*
‡ At his Twickenham Villa.
§ Okely woods, near Cirencester.

The whole enliven'd isle. Lo! ports expand,
Free as the winds and waves their sheltering arms.
Lo! streaming comfort o'er the troubled deep,
On every pointed coast the lighthouse towers;
And, by the broad imperious mole repell'd,
Hark! how the baffled storm indignant roars.
As thick to view these varied wonders rose,
Shook all my soul with transport, unassured,
The Vision broke; and, on my waking eye,
Rush'd the still ruins of dejected Rome.

Miscellaneous Poems.

TO THE MEMORY OF
THE RIGHT HON. LORD TALBOT,
LATE CHANCELLOR OF GREAT BRITAIN.
ADDRESSED TO HIS SON.

While with the public, you, my Lord, lament
A friend and father lost; permit the Muse,
The Muse assign'd of old a double theme,
To praise dead worth, and humble living pride,
Whose generous task begins where interest ends;
Permit her on a Talbot's tomb to lay
This cordial verse sincere, by truth inspired,
Which means not to bestow but borrow fame.
Yes, she may sing his matchless virtues now—
Unhappy that she may.—But where begin?
How from the diamond single out each ray,
Where all, though trembling with ten thousand hues,
Effuse one dazzling undivided light?
Let the low-minded of these narrow days
No more presume to deem the lofty tale
Of ancient times, in pity to their own,
Romance. In Talbot we united saw
The piercing eye, the quick enlighten'd soul,
The graceful ease, the flowing tongue of Greece,
Join'd to the virtues and the force of Rome.
Eternal Wisdom, that all-quickening sun,
Whence every life, in just proportion, draws
Directing light and actuating flame,
Ne'er with a larger portion of its beams
Awaken'd mortal clay. Hence steady, calm,
Diffusive, deep, and clear, his reason saw,
With instantaneous view, the truth of things;
Chief what to human life and human bliss
Pertains, that noblest science, fit for man:
And hence, responsive to his knowledge, glow'd
His ardent virtue. Ignorance and vice,
In consort foul, agree; each heightening each;
While virtue draws from knowledge brighter fire.
What grand, what comely, or what tender sense,
What talent, or what virtue was not his;
What that can render man or great, or good,
Give useful worth, or amiable grace?
Nor could he brook in studious shade to lie,
In soft retirement, indolently pleased
With selfish peace. The Syren of the wise,
(Who steals the Aonian song, and, in the shape
Of Virtue, woos them from a worthless world)
Though deep he felt her charms, could never melt
His strenuous spirit, recollected, calm,
As silent night, yet active as the day.
The more the bold, the bustling, and the bad,
Press to usurp the reigns of power, the more,
Behoves it virtue, with indignant zeal,
To check their combination. Shall low views
Of sneaking interest or luxurious vice,
The villain's passions, quicken more to toil,
And dart a livelier vigour through the soul,
Than those that mingled with our truest good,
With present honour and immortal fame,
Involve the good of all? An empty form
Is the weak Virtue, that amid the shade
Lamenting lies, with future schemes amused,
While Wickedness and Folly, kindred powers,
Confound the world. A Talbot's, different far,
Sprung ardent into action: action, that disdain'd
To lose in deathlike sloth one pulse of life,
That might be saved; disdain'd for coward ease,
And her insipid pleasures, to resign
The prize of glory, the keen sweets of toil,
And those high joys that teach the truly great
To live for others, and for others die.
Early, behold! he breaks benign on life.
Not breathing more beneficence, the spring
Leads in her swelling train the gentle airs:
While gay, behind her, smiles the kindling waste
Of ruffian storms and Winter's lawless rage.
In him Astrea, to this dim abode
Of ever wandering men, return'd again:
To bless them his delight, to bring them back
From thorny error, from unjoyous wrong
Into the paths of kind primeval faith,
Of happiness and justice. All his parts,
His virtues all, collected, sought the good
Of humankind. For that he, fervent, felt
The throb of patriots, when they model states:
Anxious for that, nor needful sleep could hold
His still-awaken'd soul; nor friends had charms

To steal, with pleasing guile, one useful hour;
Toil knew no languor, no attraction joy.
Thus with unwearied steps, by Virtue led,
He gain'd the summit of that sacred hill,
Where, raised above black Envy's darkening clouds,
Her spotless temple lifts its radiant front.
Be named, victorious ravages, no more!
Vanish, ye human comets! shrink your blaze!
Ye that your glory to your terrors owe,
As, o'er the gazing desolated earth,
You scatter famine, pestilence, and war;
Vanish! before this vernal sun of fame;
Effulgent sweetness! beaming life and joy.
How the heart listen'd while he, pleading, spoke!
While on the enlighten'd mind, with winning art,
His gentle reason so persuasive stole,
That the charm'd hearer thought it was his own.
Ah! when, ye studious of the laws, again
Shall such enchanting lessons bless your ear?
When shall again the darkest truths, perplex'd,
Be set in ample day? when shall the harsh
And arduous open into smiling ease?
The solid mix with elegant delight?
His was the talent with the purest light
At once to pour conviction on the soul,
And warm with lawful flame, the impassion'd heart.
That dangerous gift with him was safely lodged
By Heaven—He, sacred to his country's cause,
To trampled want and worth, to suffering right,
To the lone widow's and her orphan's woes,
Reserved the mighty charm. With equal brow,
Despising then the smiles or frowns of power,
He all that noblest eloquence effused,
Which generous passion, taught by reason, breathes:
Then spoke the man; and, over barren art,
Prevail'd abundant nature. Freedom then
His client was, humanity and truth.
Placed on the seat of justice, there he reign'd,
In a superior sphere of cloudless day,
A pure intelligence. No tumult there,
No dark emotion, no intemperate heat,
No passion e'er disturb'd the clear serene
That around him spread. A zeal for right alone,
The love of justice, like the steady sun,
Its equal ardour lent; and sometimes raised
Against the sons of violence, of pride,
And bold deceit, his indignation gleam'd,
Yet still by sober dignity restrain'd.
As intuition quick, he snatched the truth,
Yet with progressive patience, step by step,
Self-diffident, or to the slower kind,
He through the maze of falsehood traced it on,
Till, at the last, evolved, it full appear'd,
And e'en the loser own'd the just decree.
But when, in senates, he, to freedom firm,
Enlighten'd Freedom, plann'd salubrious laws,
His various learning, his wide knowledge, then,
His insight deep into Britannia's weal,
Spontaneous seem'd from simple sense to flow,
And the plain patriot smooth'd the brow of law
No specious swell, no frothy pomp of words
Fell on the cheated ear; no studied maze
Of declaration, to perplex the right,
He darkening threw around: safe in itself,
In its own force, all powerful Reason spoke;
While on the great the ruling point, at once,
He stream'd decisive day, and show'd it vain
To lengthen further out the clear debate.
Conviction breathes conviction; to the heart,
Pour'd ardent forth in eloquence unbid,
The heart attends: for let the venal try
Their every hardening stupifying art,
Truth must prevail, zeal will enkindle zeal,
And Nature, skilful touch'd, is honest still.
Behold him in the councils of his prince.
What faithful light he lends! How rare, in courts,
Such wisdom! such abilities! and join'd
To virtue so determined, public zeal,
And honour of such adamantine proof,
As e'en corruption, hopeless, and o'eraw'd,
Durst not have tempted! yet of manners mild,
And winning every heart, he knew to please,
Nobly to please; while equally he scorn'd
Or adulation to receive, or give.
Happy the state, where wakes a ruling eye
Of such inspection keen, and general care!
Beneath a guard so vigilant, so pure,
Toil may resign his careless head to rest,
And ever jealous freedom sleep in peace.
Ah! lost untimely! lost in downward days!
And many a patriot-counsel with him lost!
Counsels, that might have humbled Britain's foe,
Her native foe, from eldest time by fate
Appointed, as did once a Talbot's arms.
Let learning, arts, let universal worth,
Lament a patron lost, a friend and judge,
Unlike the sons of vanity, that veil'd
Beneath the patron's prostituted name,
Dare sacrifice a worthy man to pride,
And flush confusion o'er an honest cheek.
When he conferr'd a grace, it seem'd a debt
Which he to merit, to the public, paid,
And to the great all-bounteous Source of good!
His sympathizing heart itself received
The generous obligation he bestow'd.
This, this indeed, is patronizing worth.
Their kind protector him the Muses own,
But scorn with noble pride the boasted air
Of tasteless vanity's insulting hand.
The gracious stream, that cheers the letter'd world,
Is not the noisy gift of summer's noon,
Whose sudden current, from the naked root,
Washes the little soil which yet remain'd,

And only more dejects the blushing flowers:
No, 'tis the soft-descending dews at eve,
The silent treasures of the vernal year,
Indulging deep their stores, the still night long;
Till, with returning morn, the freshen'd world,
Is fragrance all, all beauty, joy, and song.

Still let me view him in the pleasing light
Of private life, where pomp forgets to glare,
And where the plain unguarded soul is seen.
There, with that truest greatness he appear'd,
Which thinks not of appearing; kindly veil'd
In the soft graces of the friendly scene,
Inspiring social confidence and ease.
As free the converse of the wise and good,
As joyous, disentangling every power,
And breathing mix'd improvement with delight,
As when amid the various-blossom'd spring,
Or gentle beaming autumn's pensive shade,
The philosophic mind with nature talks.
Say ye, his sons, his dear remains, with whom
The father laid superfluous state aside,
Yet raised your filial duty thence the more,
With friendship raised it, with esteem, with love,
Beyond the ties of love, oh! speak the joy,
The pure serene, the cheerful wisdom mild,
The virtuous spirit, which his vacant hours,
In semblance of amusement, through the breast
Infused. And thou, O Rundle!* lend thy strain,
Thou darling friend! thou brother of his soul!
In whom the head and heart their stores unite:
Whatever fancy paints, invention pours,
Judgment digests, the well tuned bosom feels,
Truth natural, moral, or divine, has taught,
The virtues dictate, or the Muses sing.
Lend me the plaint, which, to the lonely main,
With memory conversing, you will pour,
As on the pebbled shore you, pensive, stray,
Where Derry's mountains a bleak crescent form,
And mid their ample round receive the waves,
That from the frozen pole, resounding, rush,
Impetuous. Though from native sunshine driven,
Driven from your friends, the sunshine of the soul,
By slanderous zeal, and politics infirm,
Jealous of worth; yet will you bless your lot,
Yet will you triumph in your glorious fate,
Whence Talbot's friendship glows to future times,
Intrepid, warm; of kindred tempers born;
Nursed, by experience, into slow esteem,
Calm confidence unbounded, love not blind,
And the sweet light from mingled minds disclosed,
From mingled chymic oils as bursts the fire.

I too remember well that cheerful bowl,
Which round his table flow'd. The serious there
Mix'd with the sportive, with the learn'd the plain;
Mirth soften'd wisdom, candour temper'd mirth;
And wit its honey lent, without the sting.

Not simple nature's unaffected sons,
The blameless Indians, round their forest-cheer,
In sunny lawn or shady covert set,
Hold more unspotted converse; nor, of old,
Rome's awful consuls, her dictator swains,
As on the product of their Sabine farms
They fared, with stricter virtue fed the soul:
Nor yet in Athens, at an Attic meal,
Where Socrates presided, fairer truth,
More elegant humanity, more grace,
Wit more refined, or deeper science reign'd.

But far beyond the little vulgar bounds
Of family, or friends, or native land,
By just degrees, and with proportion'd flame,
Extended his benevolence: a friend
To humankind, to parent nature's works.
Of free access, and of engaging grace,
Such as a brother to a brother owes,
He kept an open judging ear for all,
And spread an open countenance, where smiled
The fair effulgence of an open heart;
While on the rich, the poor, the high, the low,
With equal ray, his ready goodness shone:
For nothing human foreign was to him.

Thus to a dread inheritance, my Lord,
And hard to be supported, you succeed:
But, kept by virtue, as by virtue gain'd,
It will, through latest time, enrich your race,
When grosser wealth shall moulder into dust,
And with their authors in oblivion sunk
Vain titles lie, the servile badges oft
Of mean submission, not the meed of worth.
True genuine honour its large patent holds
Of all mankind, through every land and age,
Of univeral reason's various sons,
And e'en of God himself, sole perfect Judge!
Yet know these noblest honours of the mind
On rigid terms descend: the high-placed heir,
Scann'd by the public eye, that, with keen gaze,
Malignant seeks out faults, can not through life
Amid the nameless insects of a court,
Unheeded steal; but, with his sire compared,
He must be glorious, or he must be scorn'd.
This truth to you, who merit well to bear
A name to Britons dear, the officious Muse
May safely sing, and sing without reserve.

Vain were the plaint, and ignorant the tear
That should a Talbot mourn. Ourselves, indeed,
Our country robb'd of her delight and strength,
We may lament. Yet let us, grateful, joy
That we such virtues knew, such virtues felt,
And feel them still, teaching our views to rise
Through ever brightening scenes of future worlds
Be dumb, ye worst of zealots! ye that, prone
To thoughtless dust, renounce that generous hope,
Whence every joy below its spirit draws,
And every pain its balm: a Talbot's light,
A Talbot's virtues claim another source,
Than the blind maze of undesigning blood

*Dr. Rundle, Bishop of Derry in Ireland. See the Memoir.

Nor when that vital fountain plays no more,
Can they be quench'd amid the gelid stream.
Methinks I see his mounting spirit, freed
From tangling earth, regain the realms of day,
Its native country: whence to bless mankind,
Eternal goodness on this darksome spot
Had ray'd it down a while. Behold! approved
By the tremendous Judge of heaven and earth
And to the Almighty Father's presence join'd,
He takes his rank, in glory, and in bliss,
Amid the human worthies. Glad around
Crowd his compatriot shades, and point him out,
With joyful pride, Britannia's blameless boast.
Ah! who is he, that with a fonder eye
Meets thine enraptured?—'Tis the best of sons!
The best of friends!——Too soon is realized
That hope, which once forbad thy tears to flow!
Meanwhile the kindred souls of every land,
Howe'er divided in the fretful days
Of prejudice and error) mingled now,
In one selected never jarring state,
Where God himself their only monarch reigns,
Partake the joy: yet, such the sense that still
Remains of earthly woes, for us below,
And for our loss, they drop a pitying tear.
But cease, presumptuous Muse, nor vainly strive
To quit this cloudy sphere, that binds thee down:
'Tis not for mortal hands to trace these scenes—
Scenes, that our gross ideas groveling cast
Behind, and strike our boldest language dumb.
Forgive, immortal shade! if aught from earth,
From dust low warbled, to those groves can rise,
Where flows celestial harmony, forgive
This fond superfluous verse. With deep-felt voice,
On every heart impress'd, thy deeds themselves
Attest thy praise. Thy praise the widow's sighs,
And orphan's tears embalm. The good, the bad,
The sons of justice and the sons of strife,
All who or freedom or who interest prize,
A deep-divided nation's parties all,
Conspire to swell thy spotless praise to Heaven.
Glad Heaven receives it, and seraphic lyres
With songs of triumph thy arrival hail.
How vain this tribute then! this lowly lay!
Yet nought is vain that gratitude inspires.
The Muse, besides, her duty thus approves
To virtue, to her country, to mankind,
To ruling nature, that, in glorious charge,
As to her priestess, gives it her to hymn
Whatever good and excellent she forms.

TO THE

MEMORY OF SIR ISAAC NEWTON,

Inscribed to the Right Hon. Sir Robert Walpole.

Shall the great soul of Newton quit this earth,
To mingle with his stars; and every Muse,
Astonish'd into silence, shun the weight
Of honours due to his illustrious name?
But what can man?—E'en now the sons of light,
In strains high warbled to seraphic lyre,
Hail his arrival on the coast of bliss.
Yet am not I deterr'd, though high the theme,
And sung to harps of angels, for with you,
Ethereal flames! ambitious, I aspire
In Nature's general symphony to join.
And what new wonders can ye show your guest
Who, while on this dim spot, where mortals toil
Clouded in dust, from Motion's simple laws,
Could trace the secret hand of Providence,
Wide-working through this universal frame.
Have ye not listen'd while he bound the Suns
And Planets, to their spheres! the unequal task
Of humankind till then. Oft had they roll'd
O'er erring man the year, and oft disgraced
The pride of schools, before their course was known.
Full in its causes and effects to him,
All-piercing sage! Who sat not down and dream'd
Romantic schemes, defended by the din
Of specious words, and tyranny of names;
But, bidding his amazing mind attend,
And with heroic patience years on years
Deep-searching, saw at last the system dawn,
And shine, of all his race, on him alone.
What were his raptures then! how pure! how strong!
And what the triumphs of old Greece and Rome,
By his diminish'd, but the pride of boys
In some small fray victorious! when instead
Of shatter'd parcels of this earth usurp'd
By violence unmanly, and sore deeds
Of cruelty and blood, Nature herself
Stood all subdued by him, and open laid
Her every latent glory to his view.
All intellectual eye, our solar round
First gazing through, he by the blended power
Of Gravitation and Projection saw
The whole in silent harmony revolve,
From unassisted vision hid, the moons
To cheer remoter planets numerous form'd,
By him in all their mingled tracts were seen.
He also fix'd our wandering Queen of Night,
Whether she wanes into a scanty orb,
Or, waxing broad, with her pale shadowy light,
In a soft deluge overflows the sky.
Her every motion clear-discerning, He
Adjusted to the mutual Main, and taught
Why now the mighty mass of water swells
Resistless, heaving on the broken rocks,
And the full river turning: till again
The tide revertive, unattracted, leaves
A yellow waste of idle sands behind.
Then breaking hence, he took his ardent flight
Through the blue infinite; and every star,
Which the clear concave of a winter's night
Pours on the eye, or astronomic tube,

Far stretching, snatches from the dark abyss;
Or such as further in successive skies
To fancy shine alone, at his approach
Blazed into suns, the living centre each
Of an harmonious system: all combined,
And ruled unerring by that single power,
Which draws the stone projected to the ground.
O unprofuse magnificence divine!
O wisdom truly perfect! thus to call
From a few causes such a scheme of things,
Effects so various, beautiful, and great,
A universe complete! And O, beloved
Of Heaven! whose well purged penetrative eye
The mystic veil transpiercing, inly scann'd
The rising, moving, wide-establish'd frame.

He, first of men, with awful wing pursued
The Comet through the long eliptic curve,
As round innumerous worlds he wound his way;
Till, to the forehead of our evening sky
Return'd, the blazing wonder glares anew,
And o'er the trembling nations shakes dismay.

The heavens are all his own; from the wild rule
Of whirling Vortices, and circling Spheres,
To their first great simplicity restored.
The schools astonish'd stood; but found it vain
To combat still with demonstration strong,
And, unawaken'd dream beneath the blaze
Of truth. At once their pleasing visions fled,
With the gay shadows of the morning mix'd,
When Newton rose, our philosophic sun!

The aërial flow of Sound was known to him,
From whence it first in wavy circles breaks,
'Till the touch'd organ takes the message in.
Nor could the darting beam of Speed immense
Escape his swift pursuit and measuring eye.
E'en Light itself, which every thing displays,
Shone undiscover'd, till his brighter mind
Untwisted all the shining robe of day;
And, from the whitening undistinguish'd blaze,
Collecting every ray into his kind,
To the charm'd eye educed the gorgeous train
Of parent colours. First the flaming Red
Sprung vivid forth; the tawny Orange next;
And next delicious Yellow; by whose side
Fell the kind beams of all-refreshing Green.
Then the pure Blue, that swells autumnal skies,
Ethereal play'd; and then, of sadder hue,
Emerged the deepen'd Indico, as when
The heavy-skirted evening droops with frost.
While the last gleamings of refracted light
Dyed in the fainting violet away.
These, when the clouds distil the rosy shower,
Shine out distinct adown the watery bow;
While o'er our heads the dewy vision bends
Delightful melting on the fields beneath.
Myriads of mingling dyes from these result,
And myriads still remain; infinite source
Of beauty, ever blushing, ever new.

Did ever poet image ought so fair,
Dreaming in whispering groves, by the hoarse brook!
Or prophet, to whose rapture heaven descends?
E'en now the setting sun and shifting clouds,
Seen, Greenwich, from thy lovely heights, declare
How just, how beauteous the refractive law.

The noiseless tide of Time, all bearing down
To vast eternity's unbounded sea,
Where the green islands of the happy shine,
He stemm'd alone; and to the source (involved
Deep in primeval gloom) ascending, raised
His lights at equal distances, to guide
Historian, wilder'd on his darksome way.

But who can number up his labours? who
His high discoveries sing? when but a few
Of the deep-studying race can stretch their minds
To what he knew: in fancy's lighter thought,
How shall the muse then grasp the mighty theme?

What wonder thence that his devotion swell'd
Responsive to his knowledge? For could he,
Whose piercing mental eye diffusive saw
The finish'd university of things,
In all its order, magnitude, and parts,
Forbear incessant to adore that power
Who fills, sustains, and actuates the whole?

Say, ye who best can tell, ye happy few,
Who saw him in the softest lights of life,
All unwithheld, indulging to his friends
The vast unborrow'd treasures of his mind,
Oh, speak the wondrous man! how mild, how calm.
How greatly humble, how divinely good
How firm established on eternal truth;
Fervent in doing well, with every nerve
Still pressing on, forgetful of the past,
And panting for perfection: far above
Those little cares, and visionary joys,
That so perplex the fond impassion'd heart
Of ever cheated, ever trusting man.

And you, ye hopeless gloomy-minded tribe,
You who, unconscious of those nobler flights
That reach impatient at immortal life,
Against the prime endearing privilege
Of Being dare contend,—say, can a soul
Of such extensive, deep, tremendous powers,
Enlarging still, be but a finer breath
Of spirits dancing through their tubes awhile,
And then for ever lost in vacant air?

But hark! methinks I hear a warning voice,
Solemn as when some awful change is come,
Sound through the world—'Tis done!—The measure's full;
And I resign my charge.'—Ye mouldering stones,
That build the towering pyramid, the proud
Triumphal arch, the monument effaced
By ruthless ruin, and whate'er supports
The worship'd name of hoar antiquity,
Down to the dust! what grandeur can ye boast
While Newton lifts his column to the skies,

Beyond the waste of time. Let no weak drop
Be shed for him. The virgin in her bloom
Cut off, the joyous youth, and darling child,
These are the tombs that claim the tender tear,
And elegiac song. But Newton calls
For other notes of gratulation high,
That now he wanders through those endless worlds,
He here so well descried, and wondering talks,
And hymns their author with his glad compeers.
O Britain's boast! whether with angels thou
Sittest in dread discourse, or fellow-bless'd,
Who joy to see the honour of their kind;
Or whether, mounted on cherubic wing,
Thy swift career is with the whirling orbs,
Comparing things with things, in rapture lost,
And grateful adoration, for that light
So plenteous ray'd into thy mind below,
From light himself; Oh, look with pity down
On humankind, a frail erroneous race!
Exalt the spirit of a downward world!
O'er thy dejected Country chief preside,
And be her Genius call'd! her studies raise,
Correct her manners, and inspire her youth.
For, though depraved and sunk, she brought thee forth,
And glories in thy name; she points thee out
To all her sons, and bids them eye thy star:
While in expectance of the second life,
When time shall be no more, thy sacred dust
Sleeps with her kings, and dignifies the scene.

ON THE DEATH OF MR. AIKMAN.*

Oh, could I draw, my friend, thy genuine mind,
Just as the living forms by thee design'd;
Of Raphael's figures none should fairer shine,
Nor Titian's colour longer last than mine.
A mind in wisdom old, in lenience young,
From fervent truth where every virtue sprung;
Where all was real, modest, plain, sincere;
Worth above show, and goodness unsevere:
View'd round and round, as lucid diamonds throw
Still as you turn them a revolving glow,
So did his mind reflect with secret ray,
In various virtues, Heaven's internal day;
Whether in high discourse it soar'd sublime
And sprung impatient o'er the bounds of Time,
Or wandering nature through with raptured eye,
Adored the hand that turn'd yon azure sky:
Whether to social life he bent his thought,
And the right poise of mingling passions sought,
Gay converse bless'd; or in the thoughtful grove
Bid the heart open every source of love:
New varying lights still set before your eyes
The just, the good, the social, or the wise.
For such a death who can, who would refuse
The friend a tear, a verse the mournful muse?
Yet pay we just acknowledgment to heaven,
Though snatch'd so soon, that Aikman e'er was given.
A friend, when dead, is but removed from sight,
Hid in the lustre of eternal light:
Oft with the mind he wonted converse keeps
In the lone walk, or when the body sleeps
Lets in a wandering ray, and all elate
Wings and attracts her to another state;
And, when the parting storms of life are o'er,
May yet rejoin him in a happier shore.
As those we love decay, we die in part,
String after string is sever'd from the heart;
Till loosen'd life at last—but breathing clay,
Without one pang, is glad to fall away.
Unhappy he who latest feels the blow,
Whose eyes have wept o'er every friend laid low,
Dragg'd lingering on from partial death to death;
And dying, all he can resign is breath.

* Mr. Aikman was born in Scotland, and was designed for the profession of the law; but went to Italy, and returned a painter. He was patronized in Scotland by the Duke of Argyle, and afterwards met with encouragement to settle in London; but falling into a long and languishing disease, he died at his house in Leicester Fields, June 1731, aged 50. Boyse wrote a panegyric upon him, and Mallet an epitaph. See Walpole's Anecdotes, vol. iv. p. 14.

EPITAPH ON MISS STANLEY,*

IN HOLYROOD CHURCH, SOUTHAMPTON.

E. S.

Once a lively image of human nature,
Such as God made it
When he pronounced every work of his to be good.
To the memory of Elizabeth Stanley,
Daughter of George and Sarah Stanley;
Who to all the beauty, modesty,
And gentleness of nature,
That ever adorned the most amiable woman,
Joined all the fortitude, elevation
And vigour of mind,
That ever exalted the most heroical man;
Who having lived the pride and delight of her parents,
The joy, the consolation, and pattern of her friends,
A mistress not only of the English and French,
But in a high degree of the Greek and Roman learning,
Without vanity or pedantry,
At the age of eighteen,
After a tedious, painful, desperate illness,
Which, with a Roman spirit,
And a Christian resignation,
She endured so calmly, that she seemed insensible

* See an allusion to this Lady in "Summer," p. 18.

To all pain and suffering, except that of her friends,
Gave up her innocent soul to her Creator,
And left to her mother, who erected this monument,
The memory of her virtues for her greatest support;
Virtues which, in her sex and station of life,
Were all that could be practised,
And more than will be believed,
Except by those who know what this inscription relates.

HERE, Stanley, rest! escaped this mortal strife,
Above the joys, beyond the woes of life,
Fierce pangs no more thy lively beauties stain,
And sternly try thee with a year of pain;
No more sweet patience, feigning oft relief,
Lights thy sick eye, to cheat a parent's grief:
With tender art to save her anxious groan,
No more thy bosom presses down its own:
Now well earn'd peace is thine, and bliss sincere:
Ours be the lenient, not unpleasing tear!
O born to bloom then sink beneath the storm;
To show us virtue in her fairest form;
To show us artless reason's moral reign,
What boastful science arrogates in vain;
The obedient passions knowing each their part;
Calm light the head, and harmony the heart!
Yes, we must follow soon, will glad obey;
When a few suns have roll'd their cares away,
Tired with vain life, will close the willing eye:
'Tis the great birthright of mankind to die.
Bless'd be the bark! that wafts us to the shore,
Where death-divided friends shall part no more:
To join thee there, here with thy dust repose,
Is all the hope thy hapless mother knows

ON THE DEATH OF HIS MOTHER.*

YE fabled Muses, I your aid disclaim,
Your airy raptures, and your fancied flame:
True genuine wo my throbbing breast inspires,
Love prompts my lays, and filial duty fires;
My soul springs instant at the warm design,
And the heart dictates every flowing line.
See! where the kindest, best of mothers lies,
And death has closed her ever watching eyes;
Has lodged at last in peace her weary breast,
And lull'd her many piercing cares to rest.
No more the orphan train around her stands,
While her full heart upbraids her needy hands!
No more the widow's lonely fate she feels,
The shock severe that modest want conceals,
The oppressor's scourge, the scorn of wealthy pride,
And poverty's unnumber'd ills beside.
For see! attended by the angelic throng,
Through yonder worlds of light she glides along,
And claims the well earn'd raptures of the sky:
Yet fond concern recalls the mother's eye;
She seeks the helpless orphans left behind;
So hardly left! so bitterly resign'd!
Still, still! is she my soul's diurnal theme,
The waking vision, and the wailing dream:
Amid the ruddy sun's enlivening blaze
O'er my dark eyes her dewy image plays,
And in the dread dominion of the night
Shines out again the sadly pleasing sight.
Triumphant virtue all around her darts,
And more than volumes every look imparts:
Looks, soft, yet awful; melting, yet serene;
Where both the mother and the saint are seen.
But ah! that night—that torturing night remains;
May darkness dye it with the deepest stains,
May joy on it forsake her rosy bowers,
And streaming sorrow blast its baleful hours,
When on the margin of the briny flood,
Chill'd with a sad presaging damp I stood,
Took the last look, ne'er to behold her more,
And mix'd our murmurs with the wavy roar;
Heard the last words fall from her pious tongue,
Then, wild into the bulging vessel flung,
Which soon, too soon, convey'd me from her sighs
Dearer than life, and liberty, and light!
Why was I then, ye powers, reserved for this?
Nor sunk that moment in the vast abyss?
Devour'd at once by the relentless wave,
And whelm'd for ever in a watery grave?—
Down, ye wild wishes of unruly wo!—
I see her with immortal beauty glow;
The early wrinkle, care-contracted, gone,
Her tears all wiped, and all her sorrows flown;
The exalting voice of Heaven I hear her breathe,
To soothe her soul in agonies of death.
I see her through the mansions blest above,
And now she meets her dear expecting Love.
Heart-cheering sight! but yet, alas! o'erspread
By the dark gloom of Grief's uncheerful shade.
Come then, of reason the reflecting hour,
And let me trust the kind o'erruling Power,
Who from the right commands the shining day,
The poor man's portion, and the orphan's stay.

* See the Memoir.

THE HAPPY MAN.

HE's not the happy man, to whom is given
A plenteous fortune by indulgent Heaven;
Whose gilded roofs on shining columns rise,
And painted walls enchant the gazer's eyes:
Whose table flows with hospitable cheer,
And all the various bounty of the year;
Whose valleys smile, whose gardens breathe the spring,
Whose carved mountains bleat, and forests sing:
For whom the cooling shade in summer twines,
While his full cellars give their generous wines;

From whose wide fields unbounded autumn pours
A golden tide into his swelling stores:
Whose winter laughs; for whom the liberal gales
Stretch the big sheet, and toiling commerce sails;
When yielding crowds attend, and pleasure serves;
While youth, and health, and vigour string his nerves.
E'en not all these, in one rich lot combined,
Can make the happy man, without the mind;
Where judgment sits clear-sighted, and surveys
The chain of reason with unerring gaze;
Where fancy lives, and to the brightening eyes,
His fairer scenes, and bolder figures rise;
Where social love exerts her soft command,
And lays the passions with a tender hand,
Whence every virtue flows, in rival strife,
And all the moral harmony of life.
Nor canst thou, Dodington, this truth decline,
Thine is the fortune, and the mind is thine.

A PARAPHRASE

ON THE LATTER PART OF THE SIXTH CHAPTER OF ST. MATTHEW.

When my breast labours with oppressive care,
And o'er my cheek descends the falling tear;
While all my warring passions are at strife,
O, let me listen to the words of life!
Raptures deep-felt His doctrine did impart,
And thus He raised from earth the drooping heart.
'Think not, when all, your scanty stores afford;
Is spread at once upon the sparing board;
Think not, when worn the homely robe appears,
While, on the roof, the howling tempest bears;
What further shall this feeble life sustain,
And what shall clothe these shivering limbs again!
Say, does not life its nourishment exceed?
And the fair body its investing weed?
'Behold! and look away your low despair—
See the light tenants of the barren air:
To them, nor stores, nor granaries belong,
Nought, but the woodland, and the pleasing song;
Yet, your kind heavenly Father bends his eye
On the least wing that flits along the sky,
To him they sing, when Spring renews the plain,
To him they cry in Winter's pinching reign;
Nor is their music, nor their plaint in vain:
He hears the gay and the distressful call,
And with unsparing bounty fills them all.
'Observe the rising lily's snowy grace,
Observe the various vegetable race;
They neither toil nor spin, but careless grow,
Yet see how warm they blush, how bright they glow!
What regal vestments can with them compare!
What king so shining, or what queen so fair!
If ceaseless thus the fowls of Heaven he feeds,
If o'er the fields such lucid robes he spreads:
Will he not care for you, ye faithless, say?
Is he unwise? or are ye less than they?

ON ÆOLUS'S HARP

Ethereal race, inhabitants of air,
Who hymn your God amid the secret grove;
Ye unseen beings, to my harp repair,
And raise majestic strains, or melt in love.

Those tender notes, how kindly they upbraid,
With what soft wo they thrill the lover's heart!
Sure from the hand of some unhappy maid,
Who died for love, those sweet complainings part.

But hark! that strain was of a graver tone,
On the deep strings his hand some hermit throws,
Or he, the sacred Bard,* who sat alone
In the drear waste, and wept his people's woes.

Such was the song which Zion's children sung,
When by Euphrates' stream they made their plaint;
And to such sadly solemn notes are strung
Angelic harps to sooth a dying saint.

Methinks I hear the full celestial choir,
Through Heaven's high dome their awful anthem raise;
Now chanting clear, and now they all conspire
To swell the lofty hymn from praise to praise.

Let me, ye wandering spirits of the wind,
Who, as wild fancy prompts you, touch the string,
Smit with your theme, be in your chorus join'd,
For, till you cease, my Muse forgets to sing.

HYMN ON SOLITUDE.

Hail, mildly pleasing Solitude,
Companion of the wise and good;
But from whose holy piercing eye,
The herd of fools, and villains fly.

Oh! how I love with thee to walk,
And listen to thy whisper'd talk,
Which innocence and truth imparts,
And melts the most obdurate hearts.

A thousand shapes you wear with ease,
And still in every shape you please.
Now wrapt in some mysterious dream,
A lone philosopher you seem;
Now quick from hill to vale you fly,
And now you sweep the vaulted sky;

* Jeremiah.

A shepherd next, you haunt the plain,
And warble forth your oaten strain.
A lover now, with all the grace
Of that sweet passion in your face:
Then calm'd to friendship, you assume
The gentle looking Hertford's bloom,
As, with her Musidora, she
(Her Musidora fond of thee)
Amid the long-withdrawing vale,
Awakes the rival'd nightingale.

Thine is the balmy breath of morn,
Just as the dew-bent rose is born;
And while meridian fervors beat,
Thine is the woodland dumb retreat;
But chief, when evening scenes decay,
And the faint landscape swims away,
Thine is the doubtful soft decline,
And that best hour of musing thine.

Descending angels bless thy train,
The virtues of the sage and swain;
Plain Innocence in white array'd
Before thee lifts her fearless head;
Religion's beams around thee shine,
And cheer thy glooms with light divine:
About thee sports sweet Liberty:
And wrapt Urania sings to thee.

Oh, let me pierce thy secret cell!
And in thy deep recesses dwell;
Perhaps from Norwood's oak-clad hill,
When meditation has her fill,
I just may cast my careless eyes,
Where London's spiry turrets rise,
Think of its crimes, its cares, its pain,
Then shield me in the woods again.

TO SERAPHINA.

The wanton's charms, however bright,
Are like the false illusive light,
Whose flattering unauspicious blaze
To precipices oft betrays:
But that sweet ray your beauties dart,
Which clears the mind, and cleans the heart,
Is like the sacred queen of night,
Who pours a lovely gentle light
Wide o'er the dark, by wanderers blest,
Conducting them to peace and rest.
A vicious love depraves the mind,
'Tis anguish, guilt, and folly join'd;
But Seraphina's eyes dispense
A mild and gracious influence;
Such as in visions angels shed
Around the heaven-illumined head
To love thee, Seraphina, sure
is to be tender, happy, pure;
'Tis from low passions to escape,
And woo bright virtue's fairest shape;
'Tis ecstasy with wisdom join'd;
And heaven infused into the mind.

VERSES ADDRESSED TO AMANDA.*

Ah, urged too late! from beauty's bondage free,
Why did I trust my liberty with thee?
And thou, why didst thou, with inhuman art,
If not resolved to take, seduce my heart?
Yes, yes, you said, for lovers' eyes speak true;
You must have seen how fast my passion grew:
And, when your glances chanced on me to shine
How my fond soul ecstatic sprung to thine!
But mark me, fair one—what I now declare
Thy deep attention claims and serious care:
It is no common passion fires my breast;
I must be wretched, or I must be blest!
My woes all other remedy deny;
Or, pitying, give me hope, or bid me die!

TO THE SAME,

WITH A COPY OF THE "SEASONS."

Accept, loved Nymph, this tribute due
To tender friendship, love, and you:†
But with it take what breathed the whole,
O take to thine the poet's soul.
If Fancy here her power displays,
And if a heart exalts these lays—
You, fairest, in that fancy shine,
And all that heart is fondly thine.

SONGS.

A NUPTIAL SONG.

Come, gentle Venus! and assuage
A warring world, a bleeding age.
For nature lives beneath thy ray,
The wintry tempests haste away,
A lucid calm invests the sea,
Thy native deep is full of thee:
The flowering earth where'er you fly,
Is all o'er spring, all sun the sky.
A genial spirit warms the breeze;
Unseen among the blooming trees,
The feather'd lovers tune their throat,
The desert growls a soften'd note,

* Amanda, as is stated in the Memoir, was a Miss Young, who married Vice Admiral Campbell.

† In another MS. the two first lines read:

Accept, dear Nymph! a tribute due
To sacred friendship and to you.

Glad o'er the meads the cattle bound,
And love and harmony go round.
But chief into the human heart
You strike the dear delicious dart;
You teach us pleasing pangs to know,
To languish in luxurious wo,
To feel the generous passions rise,
Grow good by gazing, mild by sighs;
Each happy moment to improve,
And fill the perfect year with love.
Come, thou delight of heaven and earth
To whom all creatures owe their birth:
Oh, come, sweet smiling! tender, come!
And yet prevent our final doom.
For long the furious god of war
Has crush'd us with his iron car,
Has raged along our ruin'd plains,
Has foil'd them with his cruel stains,
Has sunk our youth in endless sleep,
And made the widow'd virgin weep.
Now let him feel thy wonted charms,
Oh, take him to thy twining arms!
And, while thy bosom heaves on his,
While deep he prints the humid kiss,
Ah, then! his stormy heart control,
And sigh thyself into his soul.

TO AMANDA.*

Come, dear Amanda, quit the town,
And to the rural hamlets fly;
Behold! the wintry storms are gone:
A gentle radiance glads the sky.

The birds awake, the flowers appear,
Earth spreads a verdant couch for thee;
'Tis joy and music all we hear,
'Tis love and beauty all we see.

Come, let us mark the gradual spring,
How peeps the bud, the blossom blows;
Till Philomel begins to sing,
And perfect May to swell the rose.

E'en so thy rising charms improve,
As life's warm season grows more bright;
And opening to the sighs of love,
Thy beauties glow with full delight.

TO AMANDA.

Unless with my Amanda bless'd,
In vain I twine the woodbine bower;
Unless to deck her sweeter breast,
In vain I rear the breathing flower.

Awaken'd by the genial year,
In vain the birds around me sing;
In vain the freshening fields appear:—
Without my love there is no Spring.

TO FORTUNE.

For ever, Fortune, wilt thou prove,
An unrelenting foe to love,
And when we meet a mutual heart,
Come in between, and bid us part:

Bid us sigh on from day to day
And wish, and wish the soul away;
Till youth and genial years are flown,
And all the love of life is gone?

But busy, busy still art thou,
To bind the loveless joyless vow,
The heart from pleasure to delude,
And join the gentle to the rude.

For pomp, and noise, and senseless show
To make us Nature's joys forego,
Beneath a gay dominion groan,
And put the golden fetter on!

For once, O Fortune, hear my prayer,
And I absolve thy future care;
All other blessings I resign,
Make but the dear Amanda mine.

COME, GENTLE GOD.

Come, gentle God of soft desire,
Come and possess my happy breast,
Not fury-like in flames and fire,
Or frantic folly's wildness drest;*

But come in friendship's angel-guise;
Yet dearer thou than friendship art,
More tender spirit in thy eyes,
More sweet emotions at thy heart.

O, come with goodness in thy train,
With peace and pleasure void of storm,
And wouldst thou me for ever gain,
Put on Amanda's winning form.

* This song was obligingly contributed to this edition by William Henry, present Lord Lyttelton, from a copy in Thomson's own hand, and is printed for the first time.

* A MS. copy of this song has the following variations

In rapture, rage, and nonsense drest.

These are the vain disguise of love,
And, or bespeak dissembled pains
Or else a fleeting fever prove,
The frantic passion of the veins.

TO HER I LOVE.

Tell me, thou soul of her I love,
Ah! tell me whither art thou fled;
To what delightful world above,
Appointed for the happy dead?

Or dost thou, free, at pleasure, roam,
And sometimes share thy lover's wo;
Where, void of thee, his cheerless home
Can now, alas! no comfort know?

Oh! if thou hover'st round my walk,
While, under every well known tree,
I to thy fancied shadow talk,
And every tear is full of thee:

Should then the weary eye of grief,
Beside some sympathetic stream,
In slumber find a short relief,
Oh, visit thou my soothing dream!

TO THE GOD OF FOND DESIRE.

One day the God of fond desire,
On mischief bent, to Damon said,
'Why not disclose your tender fire,
Not own it to the lovely maid?'

The shepherd mark'd his treacherous art,
And, softly sighing, thus replied:
'T'is true, you have subdued my heart,
But shall not triumph o'er my pride.

'The slave, in private only bears
Your bondage, who his love conceals;
But when his passion he declares,
You drag him at your chariot-wheels.'

THE LOVER'S FATE.

Hard is the fate of him who loves,
Yet dares not tell his trembling pain,
But to the sympathetic groves,
But to the lonely listening plain.

Oh! when she blesses next your shade,
Oh! when her footsteps next are seen
In flowery tracts along the mead,
In fresher mazes o'er the green:

Ye gentle spirits of the vale,
To whom the tears of love are dear,
From dying lilies waft a gale,
And sigh my sorrows in her ear.

Oh! tell her what she can not blame,
Though fear my tongue must ever bind;
Oh, tell her, that my virtuous flame
Is, as her spotless soul, refined.

Not her own guardian-angel eyes
With chaster tenderness his care,
Not purer her own wishes rise,
Not holier her own sighs in prayer.

But if, at first, her virgin fear
Should start at love's suspected name,
With that of friendship sooth her ear—
True love and friendship are the same.

TO THE NIGHTINGALE.

O Nightingale, best poet of the grove,
That plaintive strain can ne'er belong to thee,
Bless'd in the full possession of thy love:
O lend that strain, sweet Nightingale, to me!

'Tis mine, alas! to mourn my wretched fate:
I love a maid who all my bosom charms,
Yet lose my days without this lovely mate;
Inhuman fortune keeps her from my arms.

You, happy birds! by nature's simple laws
Lead your soft lives, sustain'd by nature's fare;
You dwell wherever roving fancy draws,
And love and song is all your pleasing care:

But we, vain slaves of interest and of pride,
Dare not be bless'd, lest envious tongues should blame:
And hence, in vain, I languish for my bride!
O mourn with me, sweet bird, my hapless flame.

TO MYRA.

O thou, whose tender serious eyes
Expressive speak the mind I love;
The gentle azure of the skies,
The pensive shadows of the grove:

O mix thy beauteous beams with mine
And let us interchange our hearts;
Let all their sweetness on me shine,
Pour'd through my soul be all their darts.

Ah! 'tis too much! I can not bear
At once so soft, so keen a ray:
In pity, then, my lovely fair,
O turn those killing eyes away!

But what avails it to conceal
One charm, where nought but charms I see?

Their lustre then again reveal,
And let me, Myra, die of thee!

SONGS IN THE MASQUE OF 'ALFRED.'*

TO PEACE.

O Peace! the fairest child of Heaven,
To whom the sylvan reign was given,
The vale, the fountain, and the grove,
With every softer scene of love:
Return, sweet Peace! and cheer the weeping swain!
Return, with Ease and Pleasure in thy train.

TO ALFRED.

FIRST SPIRIT.

Hear, Alfred, father of the state,
Thy genius Heaven's high will declare!
What proves the hero truly great,
Is never, never to despair:
Is never to despair.

SECOND SPIRIT.

Thy hope awake, thy heart expand,
With all its vigour, all its fires.
Arise! and save a sinking land!
Thy country calls, and Heaven inspires.

BOTH SPIRITS.

Earth calls, and Heaven inspires.

"SWEET VALLEY, SAY."

Sweet valley, say, where pensive lying,
For me, our children, England sighing,
The best of mortals leans his head,
Ye fountains, dimpled by my sorrow,
Ye brooks that my complainings borrow,
O lead me to his lonely bed:
Or if my lover,
Deep woods, you cover,
Ah, whisper where your shadows o'er him spread.

'Tis not the loss of pomp and pleasure,
Of empire or of tinsel treasure,
That drops this tear, that swells this groan:
No: from a nobler cause proceeding,
A heart with love and fondness bleeding,
I breathe my sadly pleasing moan.
With other anguish,
I scorn to languish,
For love will feel no sorrows but his own.

"FROM THOSE ETERNAL REGIONS."

From those eternal regions bright,
Where suns that never set in night,
Diffuse the golden day:
Where Spring, unfading, pours around,
O'er all the dew-impearled ground,
Her thousand colours gay:
O whether on the mountain's flowery side,
Whence living waters glide,
Or in the fragrant grove,
Whose shade embosoms peace and love,
New pleasures all our hours employ,
And ravish every sense with every joy!
Great heirs of empire! yet unborn,
Who shall this island late adorn;
A monarch's drooping thought to cheer,
Appear! appear! appear!

CONTENTMENT.

If those who live in shepherd's bower,
Press not the rich and stately bed:
The new-mown hay and breathing flower
A softer couch beneath them spread.

If those who sit at shepherd's board,
Sooth not their taste by wanton art;
They take what Nature's gift afford,
And take it with a cheerful heart.

If those who drain the shepherd's bowl,
No high and sparkling wines can boast,
With wholesome cups they cheer the soul,
And crown them with the village toast.

If those who join in shepherd's sport,
Gay dancing on the daisied ground,
Have not the splendour of a court;
Yet love adorns the merry round.

RULE, BRITANNIA!

WITH VARIATIONS.

When Britain first, at Heaven's command,
Arose from out the azure main,
This was the charter of the land,
And guardian angels sung this strain:
'Rule, Britannia, rule the waves;
Britons never will be slaves.'

The nations, not so bless'd as thee,
Must, in their turns, to tyrants fall;
While thou shalt flourish great and free,
The dread and envy of them all.
'Rule,' &c.

* The Masque of Alfred was the joint composition of Thomson and Mallet; hence the authorship of the following songs is somewhat doubtful.

Still more majestic shalt thou rise,
More dreadful from each foreign stroke;
As the loud blast that tears the skies
Serves but to root thy native oak.
'Rule,' &c.

The haughty tyrants ne'er shall tame:
All their attempts to bend thee down
Will but rouse thy generous flame,
But work their wo, and thy renown.
'Rule,' &c.

To thee belongs the rural reign;
Thy cities shall with commerce shine:
All thine shall be the subject main:
And every shore it circles thine.
'Rule,' &c.

The Muses, still with freedom found,
Shall to thy happy coast repair:
Bless'd isle! with matchless beauty crown'd,
And manly hearts to guard the fair:
'Rule, Britannia, rule the waves,
Britons never will be slaves.'

TO THE REV. PATRICK MURDOCK,

RECTOR OF STRADISHALL, IN SUFFOLK. 1738.

Thus safely low, my friend, thou canst not fall:
Here reigns a deep tranquillity o'er all;
No noise, no care, no vanity, no strife;
Men, woods, and fields, all breathe untroubled life.
Then keep each passion down, however dear:
Trust me, the tender are the most severe.
Guard, while 'tis thine, thy philosophic ease,
And ask no joy but that of virtuous peace;
That bids defiance to the storms of fate;
High bliss is only for a higher state!

TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE OF WALES.

While secret-leaguing nations frown around,
Ready to pour the long-expected storm;
While she, who wont the restless Gaul to bound,
Britannia, drooping, grows an empty form;
While on our vitals selfish parties prey,
And deep corruption eats our soul away:

Yet in the Goddess of the Main appears
A gleam of joy, gay-flushing every grace,
As she the cordial voice of millions hears,
Rejoicing, zealous, o'er thy rising race:
Straight her rekindling eyes resume their fire,
The Virtues smile, the Muses tune the lyre.

But more enchanting than the Muse's song,
United Britons thy dear offspring hail:
The city triumphs through her glowing throng,
The shepherd tells his transports to the dale;
The sons of roughest toil forget their pain,
And the glad sailor cheers the midnight main.

Can aught from fair Augusta's gentle blood,
And thine, thou friend of liberty! be born:
Can aught save what is lovely, generous, good;
What will, at once, defend us, and adorn?
From thence prophetic joy new Edwards eyes,
New Henries, Annas, and Elizas rise.

May fate my fond devoted days extend,
To sing the promised glories of thy reign!
What though, by years depress'd, my Muse might bend;
My heart will teach her still a bolder strain:
How, with recover'd Britain, will she soar,
When France insults, and Spain shall rob no more.

TO DR. DE LA COUR, IN IRELAND.

ON HIS "PROSPECT OF POETRY."

Hail gently warbling De la Cour, whose fame,
Spurning Hibernia's solitary coast,
Where small rewards attend the tuneful throng,
Pervades Britannia's well discerning isle:
In spite of all the gloomy-minded tribe
That would eclipse thy fame, still shall the muse,
High soaring o'er the tall Parnassian mount
With spreading pinions—sing thy wondrous praise,
In strains attuned to the seraphic lyre.
Sing unappall'd, though mighty be the theme!
O! could she in thy own harmonious strain,
Where softest numbers smoothly flowing glide
In trickling cadence; where the milky maze
Devolves in silence; by the harsher sound
Of hoarser periods still unruffled, could
Her lines but like thine own Euphrates flow—
Then might she sing in numbers worthy thee.
But what can language do, when fancy finds
Herself unequal to the lovely task?
Can feeble words thy vivid colours paint,
Or show the sweets which inexhaustive flow?
Hearken, ye woods, and long-resounding groves;
Listen, ye streams, soft purling through the meads
And hymning horrid, all ye tempests, roar.
Awake, ye woodlands! sing, ye warbling, larks,
In wildly luscious notes! But most of all,
Attend, ye grateful fair, attend the youth
Who sweetly sings of nature and of you:
From you alone his conscious breast expects
Its soft rewards, by sordid love of gain

Unbias'd, undebased; to meaner minds
Belong such narrow views; his nobler soul,
Transported with a generous thirst of fame,
Sublimely rises with expanded wings,
And through the lucid empyrean soars.
So the young eagle wings its rapid way
Through heaven's broad azure; sometimes springs aloft,
Now drops, now cleaves with even-waving wings
The yielding air, nor seas nor mountains stop
Its flight impetuous, gazing at the sun
With irretorted eye, whilst he pervades
A trackless void, and unexplored before.
Long had the curious traveller strove to find
The ruins of aspiring Babylon—
In vain—for nought the nicest eye could trace
Save one wide, watery, undistinguish'd waste:
But you with more than magic art have raised
Semiramis's city from its grave;
You have reversed the scripture curse, which said,
Dragons shall here inhabit; in your page
We view the rising spires; the hurried eye
Distracted wanders through the verdant maze;
In middle air the pendant gardens hang,
Tremendous ceiling!—whilst no solar beam
Falls on the lengthen'd gloom beneath; the woods
Project above a steep-alluring shade;
The finish'd garden opens to the view
Wide stretching vistas, while the whispering wind
Dimples along the breezy-ruffled lake.
Now every tree irregular and bush
Are prodigal of harmony: the birds
Frequent the aërial wood, and nature blushes,
Ashamed to find herself outdone by art:
These and a thousand beauties could I sing,
Collecting like the ever-toiling bee
From yonder mingled wilderness of flowers
The aromatic sweets; while you, great youth!
O'er thy decaying country chief preside;
Be thou her genius call'd, inspire her youth
With noble emulation to arrive
At Helicon's fair font, which few, alas!
Save you, have tasted of Hibernian youth.
Thy country, though corrupted, brought thee forth,
And deem'd her greatest ornament; and now
Regards thee as her brightest northern star.
Long may you reign as such; and should grim Time,
With iron teeth, deprive us of our Pope,
Then we'll transplant thy blooming laurels fresh
From your bleak shore to Albion's happier coast.

HYMN TO GOD'S POWER.

Hail! Power Divine, who by thy sole command,
From the dark empty space,
Made the broad sea and solid land
Smile with a heavenly grace.

Made the high mountain and the firm rock,
Where bleating cattle stray;
And the strong, stately, spreading oak,
That intercepts the day.

The rolling planets thou madest move,
By thy effective will;
And the revolving globes above
Their destined course fulfil.

His mighty powers, ye thunders, praise,
As through the heavens ye roll;
And his great name, ye lightnings, blaze,
Unto the distant pole.

Ye seas, in your eternal roar,
His sacred praise proclaim;
While the inactive sluggish shore
Re-echoes to the same.

Ye howling winds, howl out his praise,
And make the forests bow;
While through the air, the earth, and seas,
His solemn praise ye blow.

O yon high harmonious spheres,
Your powerful mover sing;
To him your circling course that steers,
Your tuneful praises bring.

Ungrateful mortals, catch the sound,
And in your numerous lays,
To all the listening world around,
The God of nature praise.

A POETICAL EPISTLE

TO SIR WILLIAM BENNET, BART. OF GRUBBAT.*

My trembling muse your honour does address,
That it's a bold attempt most humbly I confess;
If you'll encourage her young fagging flight,
She'll upwards soar and mount Parnassus' height.
If little things with great may be compared,
In Rome it so with the divine Virgil fared;
The tuneful bard Augustus did inspire,
Made his great genius flash poetic fire;
But if upon my flight your honour frowns,
The muse folds up her wings, and dying—justice owns.

* This was written at a very early period of Thomson's life, probably before he was sixteen; and the reason for inserting it is, that the first productions of genius are objects of rational curiosity.

ON MRS. MENDEZ' BIRTHDAY,

WHO WAS BORN ON VALENTINE'S DAY.

THINE is the gentle day of love,
When youths and virgins try their fate;
When, deep retiring to the grove,
Each feather'd songster weds his mate.

With temper'd beams the skies are bright,
Earth decks in smiles her pleasing face;
Such is the day that gave thee light,
And speaks as such thy every grace.

AN ELEGY UPON JAMES THERBERN.

IN CHATTO.

Now, Chatto, you're a dreary place,
Pale sorrow broods on ilka face;
Therburn has run his race,
And now, and now, ah me, alas!
The carl lies dead.

Having his paternoster said,
He took a dram and went to bed;
He fell asleep, and death was glad
That he had catch'd him;
For Therburn was e'en ill bested,
That none did watch him.

For had the carl but been aware,
That meagre death, who none does spare,
T' attempt sic things should ever dare,
As stop his pipe;
He might have come to flee or skare;
The greedy gipe.

How he'd had but a gill or twae,
Death would nae got the victory sae,
Nor put poor Therburn o'er the brae,
Into the grave;

. . . . . .
. . . . . *

The fumbling fellow, some folks say,
Should be jobb'd on baith night and day
She had without'en better play,
Remained still,
Barren for ever and for aye,
Do what he will.

Therefore they say he got some help
In getting of the little whelp:
But passing that it makes me yelp,
But what remead?
Death lent him such a cursed skelp,
That now he's dead

* The MS. is imperfect in this place.

Therburn, for ever more farewell,
And be thy grave both dry and deep;
And rest thy carcass soft and well,
Free from . . . .
. . . . . no night . . . . .
Disturb . . . . .

ON THE REPORT THAT A WOODEN

BRIDGE WAS TO BE BUILT AT WESTMINSTER.

BY Rufus hall, where Thames polluted flows,
Provoked, the Genius of the river rose,
And thus exclaim'd: 'Have I, ye British swains,
Have I for ages laved your fertile plains?
Given herds, and flocks, and villages increase,
And fed a richer than a golden fleece?
Have I, ye merchants, with each swelling tide,
Pour'd Afric's treasures in, and India's pride?
Lent you the fruit of every nation's toil?
Made every climate yours, and every soil?
Yet, pilfer'd from the poor, by gaming base
Yet must a wooden bridge my waves disgrace?
Tell not to foreign streams the shameful tale,
And be it publish'd in no Gallic vale.'
He said; and plunging to his crystal dome,
While o'er his head the circling waters foam.

THE INCOMPARABLE SOPORIFIC DOCTOR.*

SWEET, sleeky Doctor! dear pacific soul!
Lay at the beef, and suck the vital bowl!
Still let the involving smoke around thee fly,
And broad-look'd dullness settle in thine eye.
Ah! soft in down these dainty limbs repose,
And in the very lap of slumber doze;
But chiefly on the lazy day of grace,
Call forth the lambent glories of thy face;
If aught the thoughts of dinner can prevail,
And sure the Sunday's dinner can not fail.
To the thin church in sleepy pomp proceed,
And lean on the lethargic book thy head.
These eyes wipe often with the hallow'd lawn,
Profoundly nod, immeasurably yawn.
Slow let the prayers by thy meek lips be sung,
Now let thy thoughts be distanced by thy tongue;
If ere the lingerers are within a call,
Or if on prayers thou deign'st to think at all.
Yet—only yet—the swimming head we bend;
But when serene, the pulpit you ascend,
Through every joint a gentle horror creeps,
And round you the consenting audience sleeps.
So when an ass with sluggish front appears,
The horses start, and prick their quivering ears;
But soon as e'er the sage is heard to bray,
The fields all thunder, and they bound away.

* Dr. Patrick Murdoch.

LISY'S PARTING WITH HER CAT.

The dreadful hour with leaden pace approach'd,
Lash'd fiercely on by unrelenting fate,
When Lisy and her bosom Cat must part;
For now, to school and pensive needle doom'd,
She's banish'd from her childhood's undash'd joy,
And all the pleasing intercourse she kept
With her gray comrade, which has often soothed
Her tender moments, while the world around
Glow'd with ambition, business, and vice,
Or lay dissolved in sleep's delicious arms;
And from their dewy orbs the conscious stars
Shed on their friendly influence benign.

But see where mournful Puss, advancing, stood
With outstretch'd tail, casts looks of anxious wo
On melting Lisy, in whose eye the tear
Stood tremulous, and thus would fain have said,
If nature had not tied her struggling tongue:
'Unkind, O! who shall now with fattening milk,
With flesh, with bread, and fish beloved, and meat,
Regale my taste? and at the cheerful fire,
Ah, who shall bask me in their downy lap?
Who shall invite me to the bed, and throw
The bedclothes o'er me in the winter night,
When Eurus roars? Beneath whose soothing hand
Soft shall I purr? But now, when Lisy's gone,
What is the dull officious world to me?
I loathe the thoughts of life:' thus plain'd the Cat,
While Lisy felt, by sympathetic touch,
These anxious thoughts that in her mind revolved,
And casting on her a desponding look,
She snatch'd her in her arms with eager grief,
And mewing, thus began:—O Cat beloved!
Thou dear companion of my tender years!
Joy of my youth! that oft has lick'd my hands
With velvet tongue ne'er stain'd by mouse's blood.
Oh, gentle Cat! how shall I part with thee?
How dead and heavy will the moments pass
When you are not in my delighted eye,
With Cubi playing, or your flying tail.
How harshly will the softest muslin feel,
And all the silk of schools, while I no more
Have your sleek skin to sooth my soften'd sense?
How shall I eat while you are not beside
To share the bit? How shall I ever sleep
While I no more your lulling murmurs hear?
Yet we must part—so rigid fate decrees—
But never shall your loved idea, dear,
Part from my soul, and when I first can mark
The embroider'd figure on the snowy lawn,
Your image shall my needle keen employ.
Hark! now I'm call'd away! O direful sound!
I come—I come, but first I charge you all—
You—you—and you, particularly you,
O Mary, Mary, feed her with the best,
Repose her nightly in the warmest couch,
And be a Lisy to her!'—Having said,
She sat her down, and with her head across,
Rush'd to the evil which she could not shun,
While a sad mew went knelling to her heart!

ON THE HOOP.

The hoop, the darling justly of the fair,
Of every generous swain deserves the care.
It is unmanly to desert the weak,
'Twould urge a stone, if possible, to speak;
To hear stanch hypocrites bawl out, and cry,
'This hoop's a whorish garb, fie! ladies, fie!'
O cruel and audacious men, to blast
The fame of ladies more than vestals chaste;
Should you go search the globe throughout,
You'll find none so pious and devout;
So modest, chaste, so handsome, and so fair,
As our dear Caledonian ladies are.
When awful beauty puts on all her charms,
Nought gives our sex such terrible alarms,
As when the hoop and tartan both combine
To make a virgin like a goddess shine.
Let quakers cut their clothes unto the quick,
And with severities themselves afflict;
But may the hoop adorn Edina's street,
Till the south pole shall with the northern meet.

STANZAS.

Written by Thomson on the blank leaf of a copy of his 'Seasons' sent by him to Mr. Lyttelton, soon after the death of his wife.

Go, little book, and find our Friend,
Who nature and the Muses loves,
Whose cares the public virtues blend
With all the softness of the groves.

A fitter time thou canst not choose,
His fostering friendship to repay;
Go then, and try, my rural muse,
To steal his widow'd hours away.

ON MAY.

Among the changing months, May stands confest
The sweetest, and in fairest colours drest!
Soft as the breeze that fans the smiling field;
Sweet as the breath that opening roses yield;
Fair as the colour lavish Nature paints
On Virgin flowers free from unodorous taints!—
To rural scenes thou tempt'st the busy crowd,
Who, in each grove, thy praises sing aloud!
The blooming belles and shallow beaux, strange sight,
Turn nymphs and swains, and in their sports delight.

THE MORNING IN THE COUNTRY.

When from the opening chambers of the east
The morning springs, in thousand liveries drest,
The early larks their morning tribute pay,
And, in shrill notes, salute the blooming day.
Refreshed fields with pearly dew do shine,
And tender blades therewith their tops incline.
Their painted leaves the unblown flowers expand,
And with their odorous breath perfume the land.
The crowing cock and chattering hen awakes
Dull sleepy clowns, who know the morning breaks.
The herd his plaid around his shoulders throws,
Grasps his dear crook, calls on his dog, and goes
Around the fold: he walks with careful pace,
And fallen clods sets in their wonted place;
Then opes the door, unfolds his fleecy care,
And gladly sees them crop their morning fare!
Down upon easy moss he lays,
And sings some charming shepherdess's praise.

ON A COUNTRY LIFE.*

I hate the clamours of the smoky towns,
But much admire the bliss of rural clowns;
Where some remains of innocence appear,
Where no rude noise insults the listening ear;
Nought but soft zephyrs whispering through the trees,
Or the still humming of the painful bees;
The gentle murmurs of a purling rill,
Or the unwearied chirping of the drill;
The charming harmony of warbling birds,
Or hollow lowings of the grazing herds;
The murmuring stockdoves melancholy coo,
When they their loved mates lament or woo;
The pleasing bleatings of the tender lambs,
Or the indistinct mum'ling of their dams;
The musical discord of chiding hounds,
Whereto the echoing hill or rock resounds;
The rural mournful songs of lovesick swains,
Whereby they soothe their raging amorous pains;
The whistling music of the lagging plough,
Which does the strength of drooping beasts renew.
And as the country rings with pleasant sounds,
So with delightful prospects it abounds:
Through every season of the sliding year,
Unto the ravish'd sight new scenes appear.
In the sweet spring the sun's prolific ray
Does painted flowers to the mild air display;
Then opening buds, then tender herbs are seen,
And the bare fields are all array'd in green.
In ripening summer, the full laden vales
Gives prospect of employment for the flails;
Each breath of wind the bearded groves makes bend,
Which seems the fatal sickle to portend.
In Autumn, that repays the labourer's pains,
Reapers sweep down the honours of the plains.
Anon black Winter, from the frozen north,
Its treasuries of snow and hail pours forth;
Then stormy winds blow through the hazy sky,
In desolation nature seems to lie;
The unstain'd snow from the full clouds descends,
Whose sparkling lustre open eyes offends.
In maiden white the glittering fields do shine;
Then bleating flocks for want of food repine,
With wither'd eyes they see all snow around,
And with their fore feet paw and scrape the ground:
They cheerfully do crop the insipid grass,
The shepherds sighing, cry, Alas! alas!
Then pinching want the wildest beast does tame;
Then huntsmen on the snow do trace their game;
Keen frost then turns the liquid lakes to glass,
Arrests the dancing rivulets as they pass.
How sweet and innocent are country sports,
And, as men's tempers, various are their sorts.
You, on the banks of soft meandering Tweed,
May in your toils ensnare the watery breed,
And nicely lead the artificial flee,*
Which, when the nimble, watchful trout does see,
He at the bearded hook will briskly spring;
Then in that instant twieth your hairy string
And, when he's hook'd, you, with a constant hand,
May draw him struggling to the fatal land.
Then at fit seasons you may clothe your hook,
With a sweet bait, dress'd by a faithless cook;
The greedy pike darts to't with eager haste,
And being struck, in vain he flies at last;
He rages, storms, and flounces through the stream,
But all, alas! his life can not redeem.
At other times you may pursue the chase,
And hunt the nimble hare from place to place.
See, when the dog is just upon the grip,
Out at a side she'll make a handsome skip,
And ere he can divert his furious course,
She, far before him, scours with all her force:
She'll shift, and many times run the same ground;
At last, outwearied by the stronger hound,
She falls a sacrifice unto his hate,
And with sad piteous screams laments her fate.
See how the hawk doth take his towering flight,
And in his course outflies our very sight,
Bears down the fluttering fowl with all his might.
See how the wary gunner casts about,
Watching the fittest posture when to shoot:
Quick as the fatal lightning blasts the oak,
He gives the springing fowl a sudden stroke;

* This, and the two following poems, were written by Thomson, when at the University, and were published in the Edinburgh Miscellany, 12mo 1720.

* *Anglice*, fly

He pours upon't a shower of mortal lead,
And ere the noise is heard the fowl is dead.
Sometimes he spreads his hidden subtle snare,
Of which the entangled fowl was not aware;
Through pathless wastes he doth pursue his sport,
Where nought but moor-fowl and wild beasts resort.
When the noon sun directly darts his beams
Upon your giddy heads, with fiery gleams,
Then you may bathe yourself in cooling streams;
Or to the sweet adjoining grove retire,
Where trees with interwoven boughs conspire
To form a grateful shade;—there rural swains
Do tune their oaten reeds to rural strains;
The silent birds sit listening on the sprays,
And in soft charming notes do imitate their lays.
There you may stretch yourself upon the grass,
And, lull'd with music, to kind slumbers pass:
No meagre cares your fancy will distract,
And on that scene no tragic fears will act;
Save the dear image of a charming she,
Nought will the object of your vision be.
Away the vicious pleasures of the town;
Let empty partial fortune on me frown;
But grant, ye powers, that it may be my lot
To live in peace from noisy towns remote.

ON HAPPINESS.

Warm'd by the summer sun's meridian ray,
As underneath a spreading oak I lay
Contemplating the mighty load of wo,
In search of bliss that mortals undergo,
Who, while they think they happiness enjoy,
Embrace a curse wrapt in delusive joy,
I reason'd thus: Since the Creator, God,
Who in eternal love makes his abode,
Hath blended with the essence of the soul
An appetite as fixed as the pole,
That's always eager in pursuit of bliss,
And always veering till it points to this,
There is some object adequate to fill
This boundless wish of our extended will.
Now, while my thought round nature's circle runs
(A bolder journey than the furious sun's)
This chief and satiating good to find
The attracting centre of the human mind,
My ears they deafen'd, to my swimming eyes
His magic wand the drowsy God applies,
Bound all my senses in a silken sleep,
While mimic fancy did her vigils keep;
Yet still methinks some condescending power
Ranged the ideas in my mind that hour.
Methought I wandering was, with thousands more,
Beneath a high prodigious hill, before,
Above the clouds whose towering summit rose,
With utmost labour only gained by those
Who groveling prejudices throw away,
And with incessant straining climb'd their way;
Where all who stood their failing breath to gain,
With headlong ruin tumbled down the main.
This mountain is through every nation famed,
And, as I learned, Contemplation named.
O happy me! when I had reach'd its top
Unto my sight a boundless scene did ope.
First, sadly I survey'd with downward eye,
Of restless men below the busy fry,
Who hunted trifles in an endless maze,
Like foolish boys, on sunny summer days,
Pursuing butterflies with all their might,
Who can't their troubles, in the chase requite.
The painted insect, he who most admires,
Grieves most when it in his rude hand expires;
Or should it live, with endless fears is toss'd,
Lest it take wing and be for ever lost.
Some men I saw their utmost art employ
How to attain a false deceitful joy,
Which from afar conspicuously did blaze,
And at a distance fixed their ravish'd gaze,
But nigh at hand it mock'd their fond embrace.
When lo! again it flashed in their eyes,
But still, as they drew near, the fond illusion dies.
Just so I've seen a water-dog pursue
An unflown duck within his greedy view,
When he has, panting, at his prey arrived,
The coxcomb fooling—suddenly it dived;
He, gripping, is almost with water choked,
And grieves that all his towering hopes are mock'd
Then it emerges, he renews his toil,
And o'er and o'er again he gets the foil.
Yea, all the joys beneath the conscious sun,
And softer ones that his inspection shun,
Much of their pleasures in fruition fade.
Enjoyment o'er them throws a sullen shade.
The reason is, we promise vaster things
And sweeter joys than from their nature springs:
When they are lost, we weep the apparent bliss,
And not what really in Fruition is;
So that our griefs are greater than our joys,
And real pain springs from fantastic toys.
Though all terrene delights of men below
Are almost nothing but a glaring show;
Yet if there always were a virgin joy
When t'other fades to sooth the wanton boy,
He somewhat might excuse his heedless course,
Some show of reason for the same enforce:
But frugal nature wisely does deny
To mankind such profuse variety;
Has what is needful only to us given,
To feed and cheer us in the way to Heaven;
And more would but the traveller delay,
Impede and clog him in his upward way.
I from the mount all mortal pleasures saw
Themselves within a narrow compass draw:
The libertine a nauseous circle run,
And dully acted what he'd often done.

Just so when Luna darts her silver ray,
And pours on silent earth a paler day:
From Stygian caves the flitting fairies scud,
And on the margent of some limpid flood,
Which by reflected moonlight darts a glance,
In midnight circles range themselves and dance.

To-morrow, cries he, will us entertain:
Pray what's to-morrow but to-day again?
Deluded youth, no more the chase pursue,
So oft deceived, no more the toil renew.
But in a constant and a fix'd design
Of acting well there is a lasting mine
Of solid satisfaction, purest joy,
For virtue's pleasures never, never cloy:
Then hither come, climb up the steep ascent,
Your painful labour you will ne'er repent,
From Heaven itself here you're but one remove,
Here's the præludium of the joys above,
Here you'll behold the awful Godhead shine,
And all perfections in the same combine;
You'll see that God, who, by his powerful call,
From empty nothing drew this spacious all,
Made beauteous order the rude mass control
And every part subservient to the whole;
Here you'll behold upon the fatal tree
The God of Nature bleed, expire, and die,
For such as 'gainst his holy laws rebel,
And such as bid defiance to his hell.
Through the dark gulf here you may clearly pry
'Twixt narrow Time and vast Eternity.
Behold the Godhead just, as well as good,
And vengeance pour'd on tramplers on his blood:
But all the tears wiped from his people's eyes,
And, for their entrance, cleave the parting skies.
Then sure you will with holy ardours burn,
And to seraphic heats your passion turn;
Then in your eyes all mortal fair will fade,
And leave of mortal beauties but the shade;
Yourself to him you'll solemnly devote,
To him without whose providence you're not;
You'll of his service relish the delight,
And to his praises all your powers excite;
You'll celebrate his name in heavenly sound,
Which well pleased skies in echoes will rebound;
This is the greatest happiness that can
Possessed be in this short life by man.

But darkly here the Godhead we survey,
Confined and cramped in this cage of clay.
What cruel band is this to earth that ties
Our souls from soaring to their native skies?
Upon the bright eternal face to gaze,
And there drink in the beatific rays:
There to behold the good one and the fair,
A ray from whom all mortal beauties are?
In beauteous nature all the harmony
Is but the echo of the Deity,
Of all perfection who the centre is,
And boundless ocean of untainted bliss;
For ever open to the ravish'd view,
And full enjoyment of the radiant crew,
Who live in raptures of eternal joy,
Whose flaming love their tuneful harps employ
In solemn hymns Jehovah's praise to sing,
And make all heaven with hallelujahs ring.
These realms of light no further I'll explore
And in these heights I will no longer soar:
Not like our grosser atmosphere beneath,
The ether here's too thin for me to breathe.
The region is unsufferable bright,
And flashes on me with too strong a light.
Then from the mountain, lo! I now descend,
And to my vision put a hasty end.

VERSES ON RECEIVING A FLOWER FROM HIS MISTRESS.

Madam, the flower that I received from you,
Ere it came home had lost its lovely hue:
As flowers deprived of the genial day,
Its sprightly bloom did wither and decay;
Dear fading flower, I know full well, said I,
The reason why you shed your sweets and die;
You want the influence of her enlivening eye.
Your case is mine—Absence, that plague of love!
With heavy pace makes every minute move:
It of my being is an empty blank,
And hinders me myself with men to rank;
Your cheering presence quickeneth me again,
And new-sprung life exults in every vein.

PROLOGUE TO TANCRED AND SIGISMUNDA.

Bold is the man! who, in this nicer age,
Presumes to tread the chaste corrected stage.
Now, with gay tinsel arts we can no more
Conceal the want of Nature's sterling ore.
Our spells are vanish'd, broke our magic wand,
That used to waft you over sea and land.
Before your light the fairy people fade,
The demons fly—the ghost itself is laid.
In vain of martial scenes the loud alarms,
The mighty prompter thundering out to arms,
The playhouse posse clattering from afar,
The close-wedged battle and the din of war.
Now, e'en the senate seldom we convene:
The yawning fathers nod behind the scene.
Your taste rejects the glittering false sublime,
To sigh in metaphor, and die in rhyme.
High rant is tumbled from his gallery throne:
Description dreams—nay, similies are gone.

What shall we then? to please you how devise
Whose judgment sits not in your ears and eyes?
Thrice happy! could we catch great Shakspeare's art,
To trace the deep recesses of the heart;

His simple plain sublime, to which is given
To strike the soul with darted flame from heaven;
Could we awake soft Otway's tender wo,
The pomp of verse, and golden lines of Rowe.

We to your hearts apply; let them attend;
Before their silent candid bar we bend.
If warm'd, they listen, 'tis our noblest praise;
If cold, they wither all the Muse's bays.

EPILOGUE TO TANCRED AND SIGISMUNDA.

Cramm'd to the throat with wholesome moral stuff,
Alas! poor audience! you have had enough.
Was ever hapless heroine of a play
In such a piteous plight as ours to-day?
Was ever woman so by love betray'd?
Match'd with two husbands, and yet—die a maid.
But bless me!—hold—What sounds are these I hear!—
I see the Tragic Muse herself appear.

The back scene opens, and discovers a romantic sylvan landscape; from which Mrs. Cibber, in the character of the Tragic Muse, advances slowly to music, and speaks the following lines:

Hence with your flippant epilogue that tries
To wipe the virtuous tear from British eyes;
That dares my moral, tragic scene profane
With strains—at best, unsuiting, light and vain.
Hence from the pure unsullied beams that play
In yon fair eyes where virtue shines—Away!

Britons, to you from chaste Castalian groves,
Where dwell the tender, oft unhappy loves!
Where shades of heroes roam, each mighty name,
And court my aid to rise again to fame:
To you I come, to Freedom's noblest seat,
And in Britannia fix my last retreat.
In Greece and Rome, I watch'd the public weal,
The purple tyrant trembled at my steel:
Nor did I less o'er private sorrows reign,
And mend the melting heart with softer pain.
On France and you then rose my brightening star,
With social ray—The arts are ne'er at war.
O, as your fire and genius stronger blaze,
As yours are generous Freedom's bolder lays,
Let not the Gallic taste leave yours behind,
In decent manners and in life refined;
Banish the motley mode to tag low verse,
The laughing ballad to the mournful hearse.
When through five acts your hearts have learnt to glow,
Touch'd with the sacred force of honest wo;
O keep the dear impression on your breast,
Nor idly loose it for a wretched jest.

EPILOGUE TO AGAMEMNON.

Our bard, to modern epilogue a foe,
Thinks such mean birth but deadens generous wo;
Dispels in idle air the moral sigh,
And wipes the tender tear from Pity's eye;
No more with social warmth the bosom burns;
But all the unfeeling man returns.*
Thus he began:—And you approved the strain;
Till the next couplet sunk to light and vain.
You check'd him there.—To you, to reason just,
He owns he triumph'd in your kind disgust.
Charm'd by your frown, by your displeasure graced,
He hails the rising virtue of your taste.
Wide will its influence spread as soon as known:
Truth, to be loved, needs only to be shown.
Confirm it, once, the fashion to be good:
(Since fashion leads the fool, and awes the rude)
No petulance shall wound the public ear;
No hand applaud what honour shuns to hear:
No painful blush the modest cheek shall stain;
The worthy breast shall heave with no disdain.
Chastised to decency, the British stage
Shall oft invite the fair, invite the sage:
Both shall attend well pleased, well pleased depart;
Or if they doom the verse, absolve the heart.

PROLOGUE TO MALLET'S MUSTAPHA.

Since Athens first began to draw mankind,
To picture life, and show the impassion'd mind;
The truly wise have ever deem'd the stage
The moral school of each enlighten'd age.
There, in full pomp, the tragic Muse appears,
Queen of soft sorrows, and of useful fears.
Faint is the lesson reason's rules impart:
She pours it strong, and instant through the heart.
If virtue is her theme, we sudden glow
With generous flame; and what we feel, we grow.
If vice she paints, indignant passions rise;
The villain sees himself with loathing eyes.
His soul starts, conscious, at another's groan,
And the pale tyrant trembles on his throne.
To-night, our meaning scene attempts to show
What fell events from dark suspicion flow;
Chief when it taints a lawless monarch's mind,
To the false herd on flattering slaves confined.

* Thomson observes, "Another epilogue was spoken after the first representation of the play, which began with the first six lines of this; but the rest of that epilogue having been very justly disliked by the audience, this was substituted in its place."

The soul sinks gradual to so dire a state;
E'en excellence but serves to feed its hate:
To hate remorseless cruelty succeeds,
And every worth, and every virtue bleeds.
Behold, our author at your bar appears,
His modest hopes depress'd by conscious fears.
Faults he has many—but to balance those,
His verse with heart-felt love of virtue glows:
All slighter errors let indulgence spare,
And be his equal trial full and fair.
For this best British privilege we call,
Then—as he merits, let him stand or fall.

PSALM CIV. PARAPHRASED.*

To praise thy Author, Soul, do not forget;
Canst thou, in gratitude, deny the debt?
Lord, thou art great, how great we can not know;
Honour and majesty do round thee flow.
The purest rays of primogenial light
Compose thy robes, and make them dazzling bright;
The heavens and all the wide spread orbs on high
Thou like a curtain stretch'd of curious dye;
On the devouring flood thy chambers are
Establish'd; a lofty cloud's thy car;
Which quick through the ethereal road doth fly,
On swift wing'd winds, that shake the troubled sky.
Of spiritual substance angels thou didst frame,
Active and bright, piercing and quick as flame.
Thou'st firmly founded this unwieldy earth;
Stand fast for aye, thou saidst, at nature's birth.
The swelling flood thou o'er the earth madest creep,
And coveredst it with the vast hoary deep:
Then hill and vales did no distinction know,
But level'd nature lay oppress'd below.
With speed they, at thy awful thunder's roar,
Shrinked within the limits of their shore.
Through secret tracts they up the mountains creep,
And rocky caverns fruitful moisture weep,
Which sweetly through the verdant vales doth glide,
Till 'tis devoured by the greedy tide.
The feeble sands thou'st made the ocean's mounds,
Its foaming waves shall ne'er repass these bounds,
Again to triumph over the dry grounds.
Between the hills, grazed by the bleating kind,
Soft warbling rills their mazy way do find;
By him appointed fully to supply,
When the hot dogstar fires the realms on high,
The raging thirst of every sickening beast,
Of the wild ass that roams the dreary waste:
The feather'd nations, by their smiling sides,
In lowly brambles, or in trees abide;
By nature taught, on them they rear their nests,
That with inimitable art are dress'd.
They for the shade and safety of the wood
With natural music cheer the neighbourhood.
He doth the clouds with genial moisture fill,
Which on the [shr]ivel'd ground they bounteously distil,
And nature's lap with various blessings crowd:
The giver, God! all creatures cry aloud.
With freshest green he clothes the fragrant mead,
Whereon the grazing herds wanton and feed.
With vital juice he makes the plants abound,
And herbs securely spring above the ground,
That man may be sustain'd beneath the toil
Of manuring the ill producing soil;
Which with a plenteous harvest does at last
Cancel the memory of labours past;
Yields him the product of the generous vine,
And balmy oil that makes his face to shine:
Fills all his granaries with a loaden crop,
Against the bare barren winter his great prop.
The trees of God with kindly sap do swell,
E'en cedars tall in Lebanon that dwell,
Upon whose lofty tops the birds erect
Their nests, as careful nature does direct.
The long neck'd storks unto the fir trees fly,
And with their cackling cries disturb the sky.
To unfrequented hills wild goats resort,
And on bleak rocks the nimble conies sport.
The changing moon he clad with silver light,
To check the black dominion of the night:
High through the skies in silent state she rides,
And by her rounds the fleeting time divides.
The circling sun doth in due time decline,
And unto shades the murmuring world resign.
Dark night thou makest succeed the cheerful day,
Which forest beasts from their lone caves survey:
They rouse themselves, creep out, and search their prey.
Young hungry lions from their dens come out,
And, mad on blood, stalk fearfully about:
They break night's silence with their hideous roar,
And from kind heaven their nightly prey implore.
Just as the lark begins to stretch her wing,
And, flickering on her nest, makes short essays to sing,
And the sweet dawn, with a faint glimmering light,
Unveils the face of nature to the sight,
To their dark dens they take their hasty flight.
Not so the husbandman,—for with the sun
He does his pleasant course of labours run:
Home with content in the cool e'en returns,
And his sweet toils until the morn adjourns.
How many are thy wondrous works, O Lord!
They of thy wisdom solid proofs afford:
Out of thy boundless goodness thou didst fill,

*This was one of Thomson's earliest pieces. See the Memoir, p. iv. and the Addenda.

With riches and delights, both vale and hill:
E'en the broad ocean, wherein do abide
Monsters that flounce upon the boiling tide,
And swarms of lesser beasts and fish beside:
'Tis there that daring ships before the wind
Do send amain, and make the port assign'd:
'Tis there that Leviathan sports and plays,
And spouts his water in the face of day;
For food with gaping mouth they wait on thee.
If thou withholdst, they pine, they faint, they die.
Thou bountifully opest thy liberal hand,
And scatter'st plenty both on sea and land.
Thy vital spirit makes all things live below,
The face of nature with new beauties glow.
God's awful glory ne'er will have an end,
To vast eternity it will extend.
When he surveys his works, at the wide sight
He doth rejoice, and take divine delight.
His looks the earth into its centre shakes;
A touch of his to smoke the mountains makes.
I'll to God's honour consecrate my lays,
And when I cease to be I'll cease to praise.
Upon the Lord, a sublime lofty theme,
My meditations sweet, my joys supreme.
Let daring sinners feel thy vengeful rod,
May they no more be known by their abode.
My soul and all my powers, O bless the Lord,
And the whole race of men with one accord.

LINES ON MARLE FIELD.

What is the task that to the muse belongs?
What but to deck in her harmonious songs
The beauteous works of nature and of art,
Rural retreats that cheer the heavy heart?
Then Marle Field begin, my muse, and sing;
With Marle Field the hills and vales shall ring.
O! What delight and pleasure 'tis to rove
Through all the walks and allies of this grove,
Where spreading trees a checker'd scene display,
Partly admitting and excluding day;
Where cheerful green and odorous sweets conspire
The drooping soul with pleasure to inspire;
Where little birds employ their narrow throats
To sing its praises in unlabour'd notes.
To it adjoin'd a rising fabric stands,
Which with its state our silent awe commands.
Its endless beauties mock the poet's pen;
So to the garden I'll return again.
Pomona makes the trees with fruits abound,
And blushing Flora paints the enamel'd ground.
Here lavish nature does her stores disclose,
Flowers of all hue, their queen the bashful rose,
With their sweet breath the ambient air's perfumed,
Nor is thereby their fragrant stores consumed.
O'er the fair landscape sportive zephyrs scud,
And by kind force display the infant bud.
The vegetable kind here rear their head,
By kindly showers and heaven's indulgence fed:
Of fabled nymphs such were the sacred haunts,
But real nymphs this charming dwelling vaunts.
Now to the greenhouse let's awhile retire,
To shun the heat of Sol's infectious fire:
Immortal authors grace this cool retreat,
Of ancient times, and of a modern date.
Here would my praises and my fancy dwell;
But it, alas, description does excel.
O may this sweet, this beautiful abode
Remain the charge of the eternal God.

ON BEAUTY.

Beauty deserves the homage of the muse:
Shall mine, rebellious, the dear theme refuse?
No; while my breast respires the vital air,
Wholly I am devoted to the fair.
Beauty I'll sing in my sublimest lays,
I burn to give her just immortal praise.
The heavenly maid with transport I'll pursue
To her abode, and all her graces view.
This happy place with all delights abounds,
And plenty broods upon the fertile grounds.
Here verdant grass their waving . . . . .
And hills and vales in sweet confusion lie:
The nibbling flock stray o'er the rising hills,
And all around with bleating music fills:
High on their fronts tall blooming forests nod,
Of sylvan deities the blest abode:
The feather'd minstrels hop from spray to spray
And chant their gladsome carols all the day;
Till dusky night, advancing in her car,
Makes with declining light successful war.
Then Philomel her mournful lay repeats,
And through her throat breathes melancholy sweets.
Still higher yet wild rugged rocks arise,
And strike beholders with a dread surprise.
This paradise these towering hills surround,
That thither is one only passage found.
Increasing brooks roll down the mountain's side,
And as they pass the opposing pebbles chide.
. . . . . .
. . . . . .
But vernal showers refresh the blooming year
Their only season is eternal spring,
Which hovers o'er them with a downy wing:
Blossoms and fruits at once the trees adorn
With glowing blushes, like the rosy morn:
The way that to this stately palace goes
Of myrtle trees, lies 'twixt two even rows,
Which, towering high, with outstretch'd arms display'd,
Over our heads a living arch have made

To sing, my muse, the bold attempt begin,
Of awful beauties you behold within:
The Goddess sat upon a throne of gold,
Emboss'd with figures charming to behold;
Here new made Eve stood in her early bloom,
Not yet obscured with sin's sullen gloom;
Her naked beauties do the soul confound,
From every part is given a fatal wound;
There other beauties of a meaner fame
Oblige the sight, whom here I shall not name.
In her right hand she did a sceptre sway,
O'er all mankind ambitious to obey:
Her lovely forehead and her killing eye,
Her blushing cheeks of a vermilion dye,
Her lip's soft pulp, her heaving snowy breast,
Her well turn'd arm, her handsome slender waist,
And all below veil'd from the curious eye;
Oh! heavenly maid! makes all beholders cry.
Her dress was plain, not pompous as a bride,
Which would her sweeter native beauties hide.
One thing I mind, a spreading hoop she wore,
Than nothing which adorns a lady more.
With equal rage, could I its beauties sing,
I'd with the hoop make all Parnassus ring.
Around her shoulders, dangling on her throne,
A bright Tartana carelessly was thrown,
Which has already won immortal praise,
Most sweetly sung in Allan Ramsay's lays;
The wanton Cupids did around her play,
And smiling loves upon her bosom stray;
With purple wings they round about her flew,
And her sweet lips tinged with ambrosial dew:
Her air was easy, graceful was her mien,
Her presence banish'd the ungrateful spleen;
In short, her divine influence refined
Our corrupt hearts, and polished mankind.
Of lovely nymphs she had a smiling train,
Fairer than those e'er graced Arcadia's plain.
The British ladies next to her took place,
Who chiefly did the fair assembly grace.
What blooming virgins can Britannia boast,
Their praises would all eloquence exhaust.
With ladies there my ravish'd eyes did meet,
That oft I've seen grace fair Edina's street,
With their broad hoops cut through the willing air,
Pleased to give place unto the lovely fair:
Sure this is like those blissful seats above,
Here is peace, transporting joy, and love.
Should I be doom'd by cruel angry fate
In some lone isle my lingering end to wait,
Yet happy I! still happy should I be,
While bless'd with virtue and a charming she;
With full content I'd fortune's pride despise,
And die still gazing on her lovely eyes.
May all the blessings mortals need below,
May all the blessings heaven can bestow,
May every thing that's pleasant, good, or rare,
Be the eternal portion of the Fair.

A COMPLAINT ON THE MISERIES OF LIFE.

I LOATHE, O Lord, this life below,
And all its fading fleeting joys;
'Tis a short space that's fill'd with wo,
Which all our bliss by far outweighs.
When will the everlasting morn,
With dawning light the skies adorn?

Fitly this life's compared to night,
When gloomy darkness shades the sky;
Just like the morn's our glimmering light
Reflected from the Deity.
When will celestial morn dispel
These dark surrounding shades of hell?

I'm sick of this vexatious state,
Where cares invade my peaceful hours;
Strike the last blow, O courteous fate,
I'll smiling fall like mowed flowers;
I'll gladly spurn this clogging clay,
And, sweetly singing, soar away.

What's money but refined dust?
What's honours but an empty name?
And what is soft enticing lust,
But a consuming idle flame?
Yea, what is all beneath the sky
But emptiness and vanity?

With thousand ills our life's oppress'd,
There's nothing here worth living for;
In the lone grave I long to rest,
And be harassed here no more:
Where joy's fantastic, grief's sincere,
And where there's nought for which I care.

Thy word, O Lord, shall be my guide,
Heaven, where thou dwellest, is my goal;
Through corrupt life grant I may glide
With an untainted upward soul.
Then may this life, this dreary night,
Dispelled be by morning light.

AN ELEGY ON PARTING.

IT was a sad, ay 'twas a sad farewell,
I still afresh the pangs of parting feel;
Against my breast my heart impatient beat,
And in deep sighs bemoan'd its cruel fate;
Thus with the object of my love to part,
My life! my joy! 'twould rend a rocky heart.
Where'er I turn myself, where'er I go,
I meet the image of my lovely foe;
With witching charms the phantom still appears,
And with her wanton smiles insults my tears;

Still haunts the places where we used to walk,
And where with raptures oft I heard her talk:
Those scenes I now with deepest sorrow view,
And sighing bid to all delight adieu.
While I my head upon this turf recline,
Officious sun, in vain on me you shine;
In vain unto the smiling fields I hie;
In vain the flowery meads salute my eye;
In vain the cheerful birds and shepherds sing,
And with their carols make the valleys ring;
Yea, all the pleasure that the country yield
Can't me from sorrow for her absence shield;
With divine pleasure books which one inspire,
Yea, books themselves I do not now admire.
But hark! methinks some pitying power I hear,
This welcome message whispering in my ear:
'Forget thy groundless griefs, dejected swain,
You and the nymph you love shall meet again;
No more your muse shall sing such mournful lays,
But bounteous heaven and your kind mistress praise.'

SONG.

When . . . . . blooming spring
Always the laughing fields in green,
Then flowers in open air are seen,
And warbling birds are heard to sing,
Almighty love
Doth sweetly move
All nature through;
Then tell me Chloe, why are you
Averse thereto;
When blooming charms
Invite your lover's circling arms?
O be no longer coy
To love and share of joy.

A PASTORAL

BETWIXT DAVID, THIRSIS, AND THE ANGEL GABRIEL, UPON THE BIRTH OF OUR SAVIOUR.

DAVID.

What means yon apparition in the sky,
Thirsis, that dazzles every shepherd's eye?
I slumbering was when from yon glorious cloud
Came gliding music heavenly, sweet and loud.
With sacred raptures which my bosom fires,
And with celestial joy my soul inspires;
It sooths the native horrors of the night,
And gladdens nature more than dawning light.

THIRSIS.

But hold, see hither through the yielding air
An angel comes: for mighty news prepare.

ANGEL GABRIEL.

Rejoice, ye swains, anticipate the morn
With songs of praise; for lo, a Saviour's born.
With joyful haste to Bethlehem repair,
And you will find the almighty infant there;
Wrapp'd in a swaddling band you'll find your king,
And in a manger laid, to him your praises bring

CHORUS OF ANGELS.

The God who in the highest dwells,
Immortal glory be;
Let peace be in the humble cells
Of Adam's progeny.

DAVID.

No more the year shall wintry horrors bring;
Fix'd in the indulgence of eternal spring,
Immortal green shall clothe the hills and vales,
And odorous sweets shall load the balmy gales;
The silver brooks shall in soft murmurs tell
The joy that shall their oozy channels swell.
Feed on, my flocks, and crop the tender grass,
Let blooming joy appear on every face;
For lo! this blessed, this propitious morn,
The Saviour of lost mankind is born.

THIRSIS.

Thou fairest morn that ever sprang from night,
Or decked the opening skies with rosy light,
Well mayest thou shine with a distinguish'd ray,
Since here Emmanuel condescends to stay.
Our fears, our guilt, our darkness to dispel,
And save us from the horrid jaws of hell.
Who from his throne descended, matchless love!
To guide poor mortals to bless'd seats above:
But come without delay, let us be gone,
Shepherd, let's go, and humbly kiss the Son.

A PASTORAL

BETWEEN THIRSIS AND CORYDON, UPON THE DEATH OF DAMON, BY WHOM IS MEANT MR. W. RIDDELL.

THIR. Say, tell me true, what is the doleful cause
That Corydon is not the man he was?
Your cheerful presence used to lighten cares,
And from the plains to banish gloomy fears.
Whene'er unto the circling swains you sung
Our ravish'd souls upon the music hung;
The gazing, listening flocks forgot their meat,
While vocal grottos did your lays repeat:
But now your gravity our mirth rebukes,
And in your downcast and desponding looks
Appears some fatal and impending wo;
I fear to ask, and yet desire to know.

Cor. The doleful news, how shall I, Thirsis, tell!
In blooming youth the hapless Damon fell:
He's dead, he's dead, and with him all my joy;
The mournful thought does all gay forms destroy:
This is the cause of my unusual grief,
Which sullenly admits of no relief.
Thir. Begone all mirth! begone all sports and play,
To a deluge of grief and tears give way.
Damon the just, the generous, and the young,
Must Damon's worth and merit be unsung?
No, Corydon, the wondrous youth you knew
How as in years so he in virtue grew;
Embalm his fame in never dying verse,
As a just tribute to his doleful hearse.
Cor. Assist me, mighty grief, my breast inspire
With generous heats and with thy wildest fire,
While in a solemn and a mournful strain
Of Damon gone for ever I complain.
Ye muses, weep; your mirth and songs forbear,
And for him sigh and shed a friendly tear;
He was your favourite, and by your aid
In charming verse his witty thoughts array'd;
He had of knowledge, learning, wit, a store,
To it denied he still press'd after more.
He was a pious and a virtuous soul,
And still press'd forward to the heavenly goal;
He was a faithful, true, and constant friend,
Faithful, and true, and constant to the end.
Ye flowers, hang down and droop your heads,
No more around your grateful odours spread;
Ye leafy trees, your blooming honours shed,
Damon for ever from your shade is fled;
Fled to the mansions of eternal light,
Where endless wonders strike his happy sight.
Ye birds, be mute, as through the trees you fly,
Mute as the grave wherein my friend does lie.
Ye winds, breathe sighs as through the air you rove,
And in sad pomp the trembling branches move.
Ye gliding brooks, O weep your channels dry,
My flowing tears them fully shall supply;
You in soft murmurs may your grief express,
And yours, you swains, in mournful songs compress.
I to some dark and gloomy shade will fly,
Dark as the grave wherein my friend does lie;
And for his death to lonely rocks complain
In mournful accents and a dying strain,
While pining echo answers me again.

A PASTORAL ENTERTAINMENT.

While in heroic numbers some relate
The amazing turns of wise eternal fate;
Exploits of heroes in the dusty field,
That to their name immortal honour yield;
Grant me, ye powers, . . . by the limpid spring
The harmless . . . of the plain to sing,
A wreath of flowers cull'd from the . . . .
Is all the . . . my humble muse demands.
Now blithesome shepherds, by the early dawn,
Their new shorn flocks drive to the dewy lawn;
While, in a bleating language, each salutes
The welcome morning and their fellow brutes:
Then all prepared for the rural feast,
And in their finest Sunday habits drest;
The crystal brook supplied the mirror's place,
. . . they bathed and viewed their cleanly face,
. . . . . and nymphs resorted to the fields
. . . . . pomp the country yields.
The place appointed was a spacious vale,
Fann'd always by a cooling western gale,
Which in soft breezes through the meadows stray,
And steals the ripened fragrancies away;
Here every shepherd might his flocks survey,
Securely roam and take his harmless play;
And here were flowers each shepherdess to grace,
On her fair bosom courting but a place.
How in this vale, beneath a grateful shade,
By twining boughs of spreading . . . made,
On seats of homely turf themselves they place,
And cheerfully enjoy the rural feast,
Consisting of the produce of the fields,
And all the luxury the country yields.
No maddening liquors spoil'd their harmless mirth,
But an untainted spring their thirst allayed,
Which in meadows through the valley strayed.
Thrice happy swains who spend your golden days
In . . . . pastime; and when night displays
Her sable shade, to peaceful huts retire;
Can any man a sweeter bliss desire?
In ancient times so pass'd the smiling hour,
When our first parents lived in Eden's bower,
E'er care and trouble were pronounced,
Or sin had blasted the creation . . . .

ODE ON THE DEATH OF THOMSON.

BY COLLINS.

The scene on the Thames near Richmond.

In yonder grave a Druid lies,
Where slowly winds the stealing wave;
The year's best sweets shall duteous rise
To deck its poet's sylvan grave.

In yon deep bed of whispering reeds
His airy harp* shall now be laid,
That he, whose heart in sorrow bleeds,
May love through life the soothing shade.

Then maids and youths shall linger here,
And while its sounds at distance swell,

* The Æolian harp.

Shall sadly seem in pity's ear
To hear the woodland pilgrim's knell.

Remembrance oft shall haunt the shore
Where Thames in summer wreaths is drest,
And oft suspend the dashing oar.
To bid his gentle spirit rest!

And oft, as ease and health retire
To breezy lawn, or forest deep,
The friend shall view yon whitening* spire,
And mid the varied landscape weep.

But thou, who own'st that earthy bed,
Ah! what will every dirge avail;
Or tears, which love and pity shed,
That mourn beneath the gliding sail!

Yet lives there one, whose heedless eye
Shall scorn thy pale shrine glimmering near?
With him, sweet bard, may fancy die,
And joy desert the blooming year.

But thou, lorn stream, whose sullen tide
No sedge-crown'd sisters now attend,
Now waft me from the green hill's side,
Whose cold turf hides the buried friend!

And see, the fairy valleys fade,
Dun night has veil'd the solemn view:
Yet once again, dear parted shade,
Meek nature's child, again adieu!

The genial meads, assign'd to bless
Thy life, shall mourn thy early doom;
Their hinds and shepherd-girls shall dress
With simple hands thy rural tomb.

Long, long, thy stone and pointed clay
Shall melt the musing Briton's eyes:
O! vales, and wild woods, shall he say,
In yonder grave your Druid lies.

*Richmond Church, where Thomson lies buried in the north-west corner of it, below the christening pew, without a tablet or memorial to say—Here Thomson lies.

ADDRESS TO THE SHADE OF THOMSON.*

BY ROBERT BURNS.

While virgin Spring, by Eden's flood
Unfolds her tender mantle green;
Or pranks the sod in frolic mood,
Or tunes the Eolian strains between;

While Summer with a matron grace
Retreats to Dryburgh's cooling shade,
Yet oft delighted stops to trace
The progress of the spiky blade;

While Autumn, benefactor kind,
By Tweed erects her aged head,
And sees, with self-approving mind,
Each creature on her bounty fed;

While maniac Winter rages o'er
The hills whence classic Yarrow flows,
Rousing the turbid torrent's roar,
Or sweeping wild a waste of snows;

So long, sweet poet of the year,
Shall bloom that wreath thou well hast won,
While Scotia with exulting tear
Proclaims that Thomson was her son.

*This was written at the request of Lord Buchan, and sent with the following modest remark: "Your lordship hints at an Ode for the occasion: but who would write after Collins? I read over his Verses to the Memory of Thomson, and despaired. I attempted three or four stanzas in the way of Address to the Shade of the Bard, on crowning his bust. I trouble your lordship with the enclosed copy of them, which I am afraid will be but too convincing a proof how unequal I am to the task you would obligingly assign me."

THE END OF THOMSON'S WORKS.